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LITURGY

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF NEW TESTAMENT LITURGY

Prof. Dr. John Moolan

EUCARIST: THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION AND
SHARING A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF THE EUCARISTIC

THEOLOGY OF TISSA BALASURIYA

Dr. Sebastian Chalakkal

EUCARISTIC CONCEPT IN *AMORIS LAETITIA*

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BOOK REVIEW

NEWS

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Editorial

The liturgy of the Church today is the outcome of a long evolution through the centuries. Liturgy has been growing like an organism, growing in the physical structure and content. Anyone seriously inquiring into the history of Christian liturgy would agree that today's liturgy has its true foundation in the liturgy of the New Testament. Prof. John Moolan's article on the historical development of New Testament liturgy is a profound study shedding light on this. He finds the New Testament as the basis of Christian liturgy founded by Jesus, established by the apostles, and continued by the Church through the administration of sacraments and sacramentals. The article observes three distinct periods in the historical development of the New Testament liturgy: the Messianic, apostolic, and ecclesial periods.

The Messianic period marks the foundation of the Church and the sacraments by Jesus Christ. Christ entrusted them to the apostles in order to make all participate in His works of salvation, providing God-experience on earth. We find the foundation of the sacraments like baptism, chrismation, Eucharist, reconciliation, marriage, priesthood and anointing of the sick in the public ministry of Jesus. The apostolic period witnessed the growth of liturgy from a fluid stage to a well-established system of prayers and rituals. We find Jerusalem as the centre of the development of the apostolic liturgy.

Jerusalem became the very first liturgical family of the early Church as the cradle or the matrix of all other liturgies. The period after the apostles known as the ecclesial period, is the period when liturgy attained a definite shape. The contribution of the Fathers of the Church is decisive in this period.

In the second part of the article the author deals at length with the diversification of the liturgical families like Western and Eastern liturgical families. Numerous biblical elements contributing to the sacramental prayers and rituals are identified in the liturgy of various ecclesial traditions. The second part of the article also deals with the origin and development of the Liturgy of Hours and the liturgical year with special reference to the Syro-Malabar tradition.

The second article by Dr. Sebastian Chalakkal is a critical appraisal of the Eucharistic theology of Tissa Balasuriya. In this article the author provides us with a critical appraisal of the Eucharistic theology of Balasuriya. Tissa Balasuriya (1924-2013), a Sri Lankan Roman Catholic priest and theologian, interprets the meaning of the Eucharist in relation to the concrete life situations of the people. After presenting the focal elements of the Eucharistic theology of Balasuriya, the author critically assesses them on the basis of the Sacred Scripture, the Sacred Tradition and the *magisterium* of the Church.

According to Balasuriya, the Eucharist has always remained central to Christianity; but the meaning of the Eucharist has been altered by the social pressures. The Christian tradition has largely diluted or neglected the aspect of sharing in the Eucharist over the centuries and the accent was, rather, on the real presence of Christ under the form of bread and wine and in the tabernacle. According to him, our Eucharistic celebration should lead to commitment. All other external factors such as colourful and rich vestments, beautiful music, display of decorations or the gathering of vast crowds are useful only if the celebration of the Eucharist leads to a meaning in life. Balasuriya argues that Eucharist must be a dynamic of social change. Eucharist cannot be well celebrated without respect for human persons. According to him, the Eucharistic celebration has an extraordinary potential for transforming persons and communities.

Dr. Chalakkal agrees with Balasuriya saying that, Balasuriya was right in pointing out that the celebration of the Eucharist was intimately related to the communion and the fellowship of the early Christians. In the first centuries, the communitarian and sharing aspects of the Eucharist were duly emphasized by the Church. Eucharistic celebration was a social act and it demanded service of others and sharing of one's self. Second Vatican Council spoke about the various aspects of the Eucharist and characterized the Eucharist as the sacrament of love, sign of unity and bond of charity (SC 47).

However, Dr. Chalakkal disagrees with two of the suggestions made by Balasuriya.

First of all the author rejects the view of Balasuriya that the use of wine in the Eucharistic celebration is not conducive to the Asian culture and it is high time to think about other alternatives. The author disagrees with Balasuriya's proposal to include passages from the sacred writings of the East in the readings for the Divine Office and in the service of the Word. Such a proposal had already been discarded by the teaching authority of the Church. On this point the Church teaches that it is an abuse to introduce into the celebration of Holy Mass elements that are contrary to the prescriptions of the liturgical books and taken from the rites of other religions.

The third article by Dr. Francis Pittappillil is a study on *Amoris Laetitia* "The Joy of Love", the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation published on 8 April 2016 by Pope Francis. Dr. Pittappillil examines the Apostolic Exhortation from a Eucharistic perspective. Throughout the document, Pope Francis highlights the significance of Eucharist in the family life. According to him, Eucharist has an important role in the creation and formation of the Christian families. Pope Francis calls Eucharist "a medicine for the imperfect" to heal the wounds of the family. Therefore, all the Christian families have to meditate on the great mystery of Eucharist to learn the basic lessons of Christian love and communion.

According to Pope Francis, "a family's living space could turn into a domestic Church, a setting for the Eucharist, the presence of Christ, seated at its table" (AL 15). The Christian Spirit and prayer atmosphere can be fostered in the family only if the family

members get proper Christian formation through the participation in the Eucharistic celebration. Eucharist bestows the grace that helps the family members to face the challenges of marriage and the family (AL 38). It heals the wounds of the family members and prompts them to live in love and harmony. The Pope Francis says that “the Eucharist is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine for the imperfect” (AL351). As medicine of life the Eucharist liberates us from the chains of sins, purifies and remits our debts which are the consequences of sins.

Pope Francis reiterates the role of Sunday Eucharist in the family life (AL 223). Christian families should make the Eucharist the source of their unity. They can do this through actively and consciously participating in Holy Qurbana each Sunday.

Dr. Pittappillil observes that, *Amoris Laetitia* delineates the parish based spirituality along with the family spirituality. The core of the parish spirituality is the Eucharistic celebration, for which all the parishioners come together. The Eucharist makes us aware that we are members of the one body of the Church (AL 186). The Eucharistic love which makes us one body, enables us to overcome the barriers of divisions that exist in the families and society. Pope Francis clarifies the close bond between Eucharist and marriage in the context of covenant. Eucharist is the sacrament of the new covenant where Christ's redemptive work is carried out (Lk 22:20). The article by Dr. Pittappillil is pointing out how the Apostolic Exhortation has realized the power of the Eucharist in the life of the family, the domestic Church and in the life of the universal Church.

Dr. Pauly Maniyattu
Section Editor

Historical Development of New Testament Liturgy

Prof. Dr. John Moolan

New Testament is the basis of Christian liturgy founded by Jesus, established by the apostles, and continued by the Church through the administration of sacraments and sacramentals. Liturgy nourishes the spiritual life and gives God experience to the people of God in their day-to-day life. Among many Christian denominations, there are various liturgies celebrated as Eastern and Western in the Catholic Church today. Though there are some differences among the Easterners themselves regarding the practical application of certain principles, the main Messianic, apostolic, and ecclesial trends are the same throughout Christendom. This unity in diversity, as general character started with the historical development of New Testament liturgy, can be divided into three periods as messianic, apostolic, and ecclesial.¹

1. Messianic Period

The Messianic period is calculated up to 30 AD, the lifetime of Jesus. The decisive divine intervention of God in the world took

place with Jesus. For this purpose, God the Father in the fullness of time sent His only Son Jesus to the world (Gal 4:4). Jesus concentrated His works upon the salvation of the world through the redemption of humanity. Thus the kingdom of God came at hand (Mk 1:15) for attaining eternal life through faith in Jesus (Jn 3:16). It is through the liturgy that Jesus executed His plan of salvation. Jesus fulfilled this economy of salvation (*Mdabbranuta*)² or the divine dispensation through in His paschal mysteries of redemption reaching up to the end of the world. He instituted the Church and sacraments, and entrusted them to the apostles in order to make all participate His works of salvation, providing God experience on earth. The true nature (*Jeevatma*) of seven sacraments are found in the following words and deeds of Jesus.

a. Baptism

Baptism celebrates the mystery of death and resurrection of Christ through the rebirth

¹ A.G.Martimort, Botte B., Dalmais I.H., Journal P., Roguet A.M., Rousseau O., eds., *The Church at Prayer: Introduction to the Liturgy*, trans. A. Flannery, V. Ryan (New York, 1968); B.Steuart, *The Development of Christian Worship* (London, 1953); J.A.Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy to the Time of Gregory the Great* (London, 1976); D.G Dix., *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London 1978); T.Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy* (Oxford, 1979).

² J.Chittilappilly, *Mdabbranuta: The Divine Dispensation of our Lord in the Holy Qurbana of the East Syrian Tradition*, Orient Institute of Religious Studies, 226 (Kottayam, 1999).

in water and spirit (Jn 3:5). Jesus baptized many disciples in Judea (Jn 3:22; 4:1-3), and commanded His disciples to baptize all (Mt 28:19-20).

b. Chrismation

Chrismation or the Latin confirmation celebrates the mysterious power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised apostles the sending of the Consoler (Jn 14:16) as the Spirit of truth who will bear witness to Christ (Jn 15:26), and will teach and remind them of everything spoken by Jesus (Jn 14:26) and will guide everyone to the fullness of truth that is to come (Lk 6:13).

c. Eucharist

Eucharist celebrates the mystery of sacrificial love of God towards humanity. He instituted Eucharist as His body and blood (Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25), and commanded to do it in memory of Him (Lk 22:19-20; 1 Cor 11:23-25).

d. Reconciliation

Reconciliation celebrates the mystery of healing by loosing and binding of sins (Mt 16:19; 18:18; Jn 20:23), reconciling with God and the fellow brethren.

e. Marriage

Marriage celebrates the mystery of the union between partners keeping up the marital indissolubility of "What God has joined, let no man separate" (Mt 19:6; Mk 12:19-27).

f. Priesthood

The ministerial priesthood celebrates the mystery of divine mediation between God and man. Jesus instituted priesthood by

handing over the Eucharist to the apostles (Lk 10:16; Jn 13:20; Lk 22:17,19), and recognized its status to Himself when He said, "He who welcomes and listens you, welcomes and listens me" (Jn 20:22-23; Mt 10:40). He established the authority of the ministerial priesthood as preaching, healing, pardoning, sanctifying, and exorcising (Mt 10:1-15; Mk 3:13-19, 16: 17-18).

g. Anointing of the Sick

Anointing of the sick celebrates the mystery of physical and spiritual healing through absolution. Jesus cast out demons with a word and healed all who were sick, fulfilling the prophetic saying of Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases" (Mt 8:16-17). The apostles were authorized to cast out demons and heal the sick through the laying on of hands and anointing (Mt 10:1; Mk 6:13; 16:17-18). They anointed the sick and healed them (Mk 6:13). The practical advice in this regard is given to the Church by the apostle James, "If anybody is sick, then call the elders of the Church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. Faithful prayer will save and raise and forgive the person" (5:14-15).

2. Apostolic Period

The apostles continued His works of salvation, establishing the Church and sacraments in different parts of the world with the motivation of continuing them until He comes again as the eschatological Judge in the fulfilment of time. The first two centuries are known as the apostolic period. Apostles gave shape to the liturgy founded by Jesus. For this purpose, Jesus had already

trained and authorized them. The tearing of the temple veil of the holy of holies at the death of Christ indicated them the beginning of a new liturgical order different from that of the Old Testament in structure and content. The Pentecostal event (Acts 1:5; 11:16) prompted them to establish this new order of liturgy in accordance with the mind of Jesus. They started celebrating paschal mysteries in their rudiment forms enabling the participants to experience the redemptive works of Christ in life as an encounter with God.

A. Fluid Stage

It is meaningless to search for a single apostolic liturgy during this period. There might have been many informal multiform oral traditions of essential parts. Persecutions and the infancy stage of liturgy at this period might have caused the lack of textually written fixed formal forms to avoid evidence to the opponents. Celebrant had every freedom to give shape to the external form of liturgy in his own way. Prayers were composed spontaneously according to the competency of the celebrant.³

This affected negatively the celebrations of the celebrants who were incapable of expressing ideas fluently. Their celebrations became weak in content, and unattractive in style and form. This freedom greatly affected the liturgical discipline and the custom of the Church. Even at this stage, though the celebrations were tentative to changes, the content of faith was the same in dispensing

the paschal mysteries of Christ. The main emphasis was on retaining the deposit of faith in its uniqueness.

a. Apostolic Mission

The visible traits of the apostolic works with a liturgical mind to enrich the community with the paschal mysteries shall be drawn from the Acts 2:42, 46-47:

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teachings and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers (Acts 2:42); and day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favour with all the people. Moreover, the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:46-47).

This manifests the status-quo of the apostolic liturgy in its rudimentary form established through their daily teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, prayers, and sacrifices.

(1) Daily Teachings

The apostles preached the word of God daily (Acts 4:2, 8-12; 5:29-32, 42; 11:26; 15:35), which led to the spreading of Gospel and the increasing of believers in Christ.

(2) Daily Fellowship

Those who believed were of one heart and soul, and had everything in common (Acts

³ Justin, *Apology* 67.5; Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 9.

4:32) becoming a worshipping community, obedient to the will of God.

(3) Breaking of Bread

At homes, they had the Lord's Supper-cum-agape, which united the community to the mystical body of Christ and symbolized the Eucharistic oneness of those who partake from the same bread (1 Cor 10:16; 11:20).

(4) Daily Prayers

Visiting the temple and synagogues they kept up the communal spirit of public prayer (Acts 3:1; 9:20; 13:5; 21:26) together with other private prayers (Acts 9:11; 10:9).

(5) Daily Sacrifice

Participating in the morning and evening sacrifices in the temple, they enriched Jewish liturgical traditions with New Testament sense based on Christ (Acts 3:1; 21:6).

Propagating this liturgical life in accordance with the command of Jesus to preach Gospel throughout the world and to baptize those who believe (Mk 16:15-16), the apostles went to their mission in different countries.⁴

b. Sacramental Forms

The examples of the apostolic rudimentary forms of seven sacraments, established as the deposit of faith, can be observed as follows.

(1) Baptism

At the request of Peter about three thousand received baptism (Acts 2:28, 41). Philip baptized many in Samaria (Acts 8:12-13; 36-38). Saul received sight and was baptized by Ananias (Acts 9:18). Peter baptized Cornelius and his household (Acts 10:47-48). Paul baptized Lydia (Acts 16:15), the jailer (Acts 16:33), and Crispus with their household, and many Corinthians (Acts 18:8) and John's disciples (Acts 19:5).

(2) Chrismation

Peter and John laid hands on the baptized in Samaria and conferred Holy Spirit to them (Acts 8:14-17). At Ephesus, Paul baptized the twelve disciples of John the Baptist, and laid hands on them conferring the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-7).

(3) Eucharist

The Eucharist was known as the Lord's Supper, and the institution words were pronounced over the bread and wine (1 Cor 11:20, 23-25) transforming them to the body and blood of Christ. Eucharist makes the Church, the mystical body of Christ (1 Cor 10:16-17).

(4) Holy Orders

The apostles appointed seven deacons to look after the daily needs of the people (Acts 6:13) and decided upon their qualities

⁴ J. Kallarangatt, A. Puthukulangara, *Pantrandu Slihanmar*, OIRSI 255 (Malayalam, Kottayam, 2001) 40-41.

(8-13). They Appointed elders (bishops) in every Church (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5) and decided upon their qualities (1Tm 3:1-7).

(5) Marriage

Paul stressed very much on the indissolubility of marriage and the responsibilities of the spouse in family and community where they live (Rom 7:2-3; Eph 5:22-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Pet 3:1-7).

(6) Reconciliation

Gentle ways of correction led to repentance for reconciliation with oneself and the neighbours establishing peace and order in the community (1 Jn 5:16 17; 2 Tim 2:25).

(7) Anointing of the Sick

Elders of the Church anointed the sick with oil for absolving sins and healing infirmities to face sufferings with joy and gratitude (James 5:14-15).

c. Jerusalem Liturgy

In Jerusalem Christ fulfilled His economy of salvation, instituted sacraments, founded the Church, and sent out the apostles to establish the Church throughout the world. Thus, Jerusalem became the very first liturgical family of the early Church as the cradle or the matrix of all other liturgies known as 'the light from the East' (*Ex oriente lux*) that enlightened everybody in the valley of death

and the shadow of darkness (Mt 4:16). In this regard, it is worth remembering that almost all the major Christian dogmas of faith were defined in the East during the first eight Ecumenical Councils such as Nice I (325), Constantinople I (381), Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), and Constantinople II & III (353, 680-681), Nice II (787), and Constantinople IV (869-870).

The fame and glory of Jerusalem crumpled down with an utter devastation of her liturgical traits with the destruction of the temple and the captivity of the people during 70 and 135 AD. This led to the abolition of the Jerusalem Church/liturgy almost for two centuries, and the holy places became under the control of Roman power.

(1) Golden Age

The history turned again favourable to the glory of Jerusalem with the independence of the Church from persecutions. The Edict of Milan in 313 by Constantine the Great⁵ led the Jerusalem Church to her Golden age of liturgy up to the middle of the fourth century. Constantine's great victory with the power of the Cross over his enemy Maxentius,⁶ prompted him to dedicate two basilicas, one on the Calvary (*Martyrium* - martyrdom) and the other on the tomb of Christ (*Anastasis* - resurrection) on September 13, 335, the day the Holy Cross was found by Helena.⁷ Constantine, with the request of

⁵Eusebius, *The Church History of Eusebius*; see P.Schaff, H.Wace, trans., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, series 2, vol.1 (Michigan, 1962) 10.5-7, p. 378-383.

⁶Eusebius, *The Church History of Eusebius* 9.9, p. 363.

⁷E.Nestle, *Sancta Cruce: Ein Beitrag zur christlichen Legendengeschichte*, (Berlin, 1889) 7-21; Stabuinger, *Die Kreusauffindungslegende*, Cited in C.Payngot, *Aradhanavalsaram*, OIRSI 256 (Malayalam, Kottayam, 2001) 261-267.

his mother Helena, constructed churches 'at Bethlehem and on Mount Olives to celebrate liturgy.'⁸ During this time, the pilgrims to Jerusalem spread the Jerusalem liturgy throughout the East and West. As a result, both the eastern and western liturgies were influenced by the Jerusalem liturgy.

(2) Devastation

However, in the second half of the fourth century the Jerusalem liturgy met with a great retaliation due to the Jewish and Muslim conquests of the holy places. Thus by the fifth century the liturgy of the mother Church of Jerusalem came to an end, and it never raised up again. There is no more Jerusalem liturgy or the Church as such left over today except for some remnants.⁹ This reminds of Jesus' prediction on the destruction of Jerusalem:

Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Killing the prophets and stoning the messengers God has sent you! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not! Behold your house is forsaken and desolate (Mt 23:37-38). Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down (Mt 24:2).

3. Ecclesial Period

The period after the apostles is known as the ecclesial period, where the

Fathers of the Church contributed much to the stable forms of liturgy from the third to the sixth centuries. This period met with many pros and cons in the field of liturgy.

B. Stable Stage

The post apostolic period felt the scarcity of eyewitnesses to the Christ events. This affected the fundamental Christ experience aimed at the liturgical celebrations. Further, the schisms and heresies started to influence liturgical celebrations at the vim and fancies of the sect group celebrants. This damaged the purity of the faith deposit, and caused great confusion in the authentic teaching of the Church. As a result the necessity of fixed textual forms was felt an urgent need of the time.

The ancient theological centres in both the East and West gave shape to the elementary structure of liturgy, though varied in different places. The Eastern centres were Jerusalem in Palestine, Alexandria in Egypt, Antioch in Syria, Byzantium (Constantinople/Istanbul), Nisibis, and Edessa in Turkey. The Western centres were Rome (the main centre) in Italy, Carthage in North Africa, Toledo in Spain, Tours in Gaul, and the monasteries in England and Ireland. Gradually these centres influenced the formation of main liturgical families or individual Churches with their filial Churches; and the use of written liturgical compositions from these centres became

⁸ Eusebius, *The Life of Constantine*; see P. Schaff, H. Wace, trans., NPNF, series 2, vol. 1 (Michigan, 1962) p. 137-138.

⁹ Egeria, *Egeria's Travels*, tran. J. Wilkinson (London, 1971), 146; P. Marvel, ed. & trans., *Journal de voyage (Itinéraire)*, SChr. 296 (Paris, 1982) 314-317.

wide spread, which led to the formation of liturgical texts in the Church.

Fixed and non-fixed elements are the two particular areas of the formation of liturgical texts. Fixed elements are God given and unchangeable as they are the divinely established apostolic traditions based on scripture, faith, and morals. Whereas the non-fixed elements are the Church given and changeable as they depend on particular life situations, where adaptations and renovations take place, upholding particular ecclesial heritage without damaging the divine economy of salvation expressed in worship.

a. Formation of Liturgical Families

The two constituent elements that influence the formation of an individual Church or a liturgical family are the apostolic tradition and the cultural background of the local community. The apostolic tradition, which contains faith, scripture, sacraments, morals, and divine authority, keep up the internal unity between different Churches or liturgies. The cultural background depends on the region wise distinctive life situations (mentality, life style, language, civilization) and practices (hereditary traits,) of the concerned community. The apostles, in agreement with the distinctive life styles in various regions (UR 14), handed over the true Christian heritage to different peoples in different places (LG 23).

(1) Unity in Diversity

The very idea of unity in diversity is apostolic in origin. The first controversy in the Church over the principle of 'unity in diversity' took place in the first century between Peter and Paul on the problem of circumcision. This problem was solved in the Jerusalem Council admitting diversity in unity of faith (Acts 15). The second controversy was over the date of Easter between the East and West before the fourth century. The Easterners observed it on Nisan 14, while the Westerners observed it on the Sunday following Nisan 14.¹⁰ Here also the dispute was solved maintaining the status quo in respect of individual traditions without damaging faith.¹¹ In the midst of other controversies, the Church was very particular to solve them through ecumenical councils in favour of individual traits.

Each Church has to keep up her own theological, liturgical, spiritual, hierarchical, and disciplinal individuality with at most care respecting each other. The external differences do not harm the unity as long as there is the internal uniqueness in fundamentals (OE 2). Further, the different Churches or liturgies are considered as the ornamental adornments in the universal Church (OE introduction). The intercommunion among Churches means the acknowledgment of the primacy of Pope, the successor of Peter.

¹⁰ Eusebius, *The Church History of Eusebius* 5.23-24, p. 241-244.

¹¹ Y. Congar, *Diversity and Communion* (London, 1984) 23.

(2) Division

Emperor Theodosius (d.395) divided the whole Roman Empire into two parts as the Western and Eastern.¹² As a result, the Churches or liturgies in those parts came to be known as Western or Eastern respectively throughout the empire. The Churches or liturgies in Persia and India, outside the Roman Empire, were counted with the East.

a. Western Liturgies

In the West, the main two groups with their concerned affinities were the Romano-African Liturgy in Rome and North Africa during the fifth century, and the Gallican Liturgy in Europe between 2-8 centuries. The Gallican liturgy was of seven groups: 1. Celtic Liturgy in England, Ireland, and Scotland (2 c.), 2. Ambrosian Liturgy in Milan (4 c.), 3. Aquelian Liturgy of the Church of north Italy (5 c.), 4. Lyonian Liturgy in Lyon, France (5 c.), 5. Mozarabic Liturgy in Spain (5 c.), 6. Gallican Liturgy in Gal (France) and Germany (6 c.), 7. Bragan Liturgy in Portugal (before 8th c.). During the eighth century, all these liturgies were integrated into one Latin/Roman liturgy/Church.

b. Eastern Liturgies

In the East according to the division of the Roman Empire, the liturgical families were come to be known as those, which are inside and out side the Roman Empire as follows.

(1) Inside the Roman Empire

The Eastern churches/liturgies inside the Roman Empire were of four groups in Asia Minor such as, 1. Antiochian Liturgy in Antioch (3 c.), 2. Armenian Liturgy in Armenia (3 c.), 3. Alexandrian Liturgy in Alexandria (4 c.), 4. Byzantine Liturgy in Byzantium or Constantinople (4 c.).

(2) Outside the Roman Empire

The only one liturgy found outside the Roman Empire was in Persia and India such as, 1. Chaldean Liturgy in Persia (2 c.) and 2. The Chaldean adapted liturgy among St. Thomas Christians in India (2 c.).

(3) Catholic Liturgical Families

The six major Catholic liturgical families both West and East in obedience to the Roman Pontiff are the Latin, Alexandrian, Armenian, Byzantine, East Syrian, and West Syrian Churches together with their filial Churches.

(a) Number of Canons/Anaphoras

The Eucharistic prayer in the West is called 'canon' (rule/law) while the East calls it 'anaphora' (offering). There are six major catholic liturgical families with twenty-three individual Churches with four canons and forty-seven anaphoras distributed among the concerned Churches as shown below.¹³

¹² A.Mingana, *Atlas Hierarchicus ecclesiarum catholicarum orientalium* (Rome, 1972) 6-7.

¹³ J.O'Brien, *A History of the Mass and its Ceremonies in the Eastern and Western Churches* (New York, 1879); J.Yazigi, *Introduction to the Liturgical Families and Rites* (Balamand, 2003); R.Roberson, *The Eastern Christian Churches: a Brief Survey* (Rome, 1999); D.Attwater, *The Eastern Churches* (London, 1945); A.Fortescue, *Eastern Churches* (London, 1909); V.Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, Denha Services 48 (Kottayam, 1998)73-77; L.Arangassery, *A Handbook on Catholic Eastern Churches*, 56.

Catholic Liturgical Families with Canons/Anaphoras				
Tradition	Church	Status	Liturgy	Euch.Prayer
W. Liturgies				Canons
1.Latin	Roman	Patriarchal	Latin	4 Canons ¹⁴
E.Liturgies				Anaphoras
2.Syro-Oriental	1.Chaldean 2.Syro-Malabar	Patriarchal Major Archiepiscopal	East Syriac "	3 Anaphoras ¹⁵ "
3.Syro-Occidental	1.Antiochean 2.Malankara 3.Maronite	Patriarchal Major Archiepiscopal Patriarchal	West Syriac " "	11 Anaphoras ¹⁶ " 7 Anaphoras ¹⁷
4.Alexandrian	1.Coptic 2.Ethiopian	Patriarchal Metropolitan	Coptic Ethiopian	3 Anaphoras ¹⁸ 15 Anaphoras ¹⁹
5.Armenian	Armenian	Patriarchal	Armenian	5 Anaphoras ²⁰
6.Byzantine	1.Greek Melkite 2.Ukranian 3.Romanian 4.Ruthenian 5.Albenian 6.Byelorussian 7.Russian 8.Krizevici 9.Bulgarian 10.Greek 11.Italo-Albenian 12.Slovak 13.Hungarian 14.Macedonian	Patriarchal Major Archiepiscopal Major Archiepiscopal Metropolitan Eparchial Eparchial Apostolic Exarchate Eparchial Eparchial Eparchial Eparchial Eparchial Eparchial Eparchial	Byzantine " " " " " " " " " " " " "	3 Anaphoras ²¹ " " " " " " " " " " " " "

¹⁴ (1) Roman canon in its integrity, (2) Restored canon of Hippolytus of Rome, (3) Combined canon of Roman, Gallican, and Spanish patristic texts, (4) Adapted canon of the Antiochean origin Apostolic Constitution.

¹⁵ (1) *Anaphora* of the Apostles or Addai & Mari, (2) Theodore of Mopsuestia, (3) Nestorius.

¹⁶ (1) *Anaphora* of the twelve apostles, (2) St. James, (3) Timothy of Alexandria, (4) Severus of Antioch, (5) Cyril of Jerusalem, (6) Ignatius of Antioch, (7) Clement of Rome, (8) Pope Julius of Rome, (9) Eustatius of Antioch, (10) Gregorios, (11) St. Peter.

¹⁷ (1) *Anaphora* of the Roman Church, (2) St. Peter I, (3) St. Peter III, (4) St. James, (5) John the Evangelist, (6) Pope Sixtus, (7) Mar Maron the founder of the Church.

¹⁸ (1) *Anaphora* of St. Mark, (2) St. Gregory Nazianzen, (3) St. Basil.

¹⁹ (1) *Anaphora* of the Holy Fathers, our Apostles, (2) Our Lord, (3) Our Lady Mary, the virgin, (4) Our Lady, the mother of God, (5) St. John the Evangelist, (6) St. James, (7) St. Mark, (8) The 318 Orthodox Fathers (of Nice), (9) St. Athanasius, (10) St. Basil, 11. St. Gregory of Nyssa, (12) St. Epiphanius, (13) St. Cyril of Alexandria, (14) Jacob of Sarug, (15) St. Gregorios.

²⁰ (1) *Anaphora* of St. Athanasius, (2) St. Gregory of Nazianzen, (3) Isaac, (4) Cyril of Alexandria, (5) St. James.

²¹ (1) *Anaphora* of St. John Chrysostom, (2) St. Basil, (3) St. James (Greek version).

(b) Structure of Canons/Anaphoras

In the following table of the Eucharistic prayers of different Churches, the Armenians and Byzantines follow the West Syrian anaphoral structure as they belong to the Antiochian family. The blank spaces in Alexandrian columns show that the West Syrian scheme is followed there, and the numbers in the Alexandrian column corresponds to those in the West Syrian

column. A comparison of these Eucharistic prayers manifests that the elements common to all of them are the thanksgiving, *Sanctus*, institution narrative, anamnesis, intercession, epiclesis, and doxology. The longest structure of East Syrian Church manifests its antiquity of first or second century origin with its Semitic character outside the Roman Empire. All other Structures might be the condensed forms of the most ancient East Syrian structure.²²

Structure of Canons/Anaphoras in Different Liturgies			
Latin	West Syrian, Armenian, Byzantine	Alexandrian	East Syrian
1.Dialogue	Diaconal Acclamation		First <i>G'hanta</i> ²³
2.Preface ²⁴	1.Dialogue		Exchange of Peace Diaconal Acclamation
3. <i>Sanctus</i>	2.Thanksgiving		1.Dialogue
4.Epiclesis	3.Introduction to <i>Sanctus</i>	.Part I	2.Second <i>G'hanta</i> ²⁵
5.Canon I ²⁶	4. <i>Sanctus</i>	3.	3.Third <i>G'hanta</i> ²⁷
6.Institution Words	5.Embolism to <i>Sanctus</i>	4.	4.Institution Words
7.Anamnesis	6.Institution Words	5.	5.Third <i>G'hanta</i> continued
8.Oblation ²⁸	7.Anamnesis	8.Part I	6.Diaconal Acclamation
9.Intercession	8.Epiclesis	6.	7.Intercession
10.Doxology	9.Intercession	7.	8.Fourth <i>G'hanta</i> ²⁹
	10.Doxology	8.Part II	9.Epiclesis
		9.Part II	10.Fouth <i>G'hanta</i> continued
		10.	11.Doxology

²² V.Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, 78-79.

²³ General thanksgiving to the Holy Trinity for the abundant graces, and for making worthy for the celebration.

²⁴ Thanks giving to the Father vary according to different occasions.

²⁵ Thanks giving to the Father for the creation of the world and everything in it.

²⁶ Logos Epiclesis: Thanksgiving to the son for sending the Holy Spirit

²⁷ Thanksgiving to the Son for the redemption of humanity.

²⁸ Offering of the Church to the Father, "through Him, with Him, and in Him."

²⁹ Thanksgiving to the Holy Spirit for the sanctification carried out in the Church.

b. Formation of Sacraments

Sacraments are the redemptive works instituted by Jesus. He did not institute them as we have them today. The Church gave shape to the present way of administration. The Church, knowing the mind of Jesus in His words and deeds at particular interventions of certain decisive moments of human life, applied them in her different life situations. Thus, the true nature (*jeevatma*) of sacraments comes from Christ, and the Church has only executed it. In other words, the sacraments took place in the absence of Jesus in order to keep up His presence alive in the Church.

1. Enumeration

Regarding the number of the sacraments there was no any prescription in the early Church. In other words, the number seven is not very ancient. Peter Damian (1007-1072), a monastic leader and the Church reformer, spoke about twelve sacraments, and St. Bernard (1091-1153) mentioned of eleven sacraments. The consecration of bishops, kings, monks, churches and altars, and washing of feet on Holy Thursday were also considered as sacraments in those days. Even though Master Simon was the first one to

count the sacraments into number seven, it was Bishop Peter Lombard (+1160) who argued theologically first in favour of the concept of seven sacraments.³⁰ St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1279) encouraged the idea. The council of Lyons (1274)³¹ and Florence (1439)³² supported it, and the Council of Trent (1547)³³ approved it.

(a) East Syriac Tradition

Among the East Syrians, the sacraments are known as mysteries (*raze*) with mystical sense. 'Mystery' (*Raza*) in its comprehensive sense is the plan of God for the salvation of humankind. Sacraments are the visible symbols of heavenly realities on earth, through which one enters into a new mode of life, expecting the future heavenly glory achieved through the redemptive works. Thus, the sacraments make humanity participate in the paschal mysteries of Christ accomplished in the Church.

(1) Early Development

Earlier, East Syrians had different ways of enumerating mysteries (Sacraments). Pseudo Dionysius of Areopagite enumerated them six in the early sixth century.³⁴ Bar Hebraeus (1226-1286) also enumerated them six, but differently, in the thirteenth century.³⁵

³⁰J. Auer, *A General Doctrine of the Sacraments and the Mystery of the Eucharist*, Dogmatic Theology 6 (Washington, 1995) 88.

³¹ Canon 28.

³² *Decree for the Armenians*, Canons 1305-1308.

³³ *Decree on the Sacraments*, Canons 1311-1323.

³⁴ See T.L. Cambel, trans., *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* (New York, 1981) 17-91.

³⁵ "Über das irdische Priestertum," in R. Kohlhass, ed., *Jacobitische Sakramententheologie im 13. Jh.*, (Münster, 1959) 17-47.

The development of number seven in the East Syriac Church was the result of Latin influence. It was Ricoldo de Monte, a Dominican missionary, who preached first on seven sacraments in the Churches of Baghdad in 1290. Pope Nicholas IV (1288-1292) sent the Latin profession of faith to the Chaldean Patriarch Yahballaha (1281-1317) stressing the seven sacrament-system in the Church.³⁶

Abdisho (+ 1318)³⁷ was the first one to introduce seven mysteries (Sacraments) in the East Syriac Church, but different from Latin tradition. Timothy II (1318-1332) furnished the list of seven mysteries with further differences. The Assyrians (Non-Catholics) today follow the order of Mar Abdisho.³⁸ See the table bellow for the details of the early counting of mysteries in the East Syriac tradition.

Early East Syriac Sacraments			
Dionysius (6thc.)	Bar Hebraeus (1226-86)	Abdisho (+1318)	Timothy II (1318-32)
1.Baptism	1.Consecration of church	1.Priesthood	1.Priesthood
2.Eucharist	2.Priesthood/Blessing of monks	2.Baptism	2.Consecration of church
3.Holy Chrism	3.Holy Chrism	3.Holy Chrism	3.Baptism
4.Priesthood	4.Baptism	4.Eucharist	4.Eucharist
5.Blessing of monks	5.Eucharist	5.Absolution	5.Blessing of monks
6.Burial	6.Burial	6.Holy Leaven	6.Burial
		7.Sign of the Cross	7.Marriage

Chaldeans and Syro-Malabarites follow up the catholic tradition of seven sacraments as the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Chrismation, and Eucharist), sacraments of healing (Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick), and sacraments of service (Marriage and Holy orders) as enumerated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church 1212-1419

c. Stable Biblical Prayer Forms Used in Liturgy

The scriptural prayer forms found stable in liturgical texts are the following.

1. Our Father

According to *Didache* 8 (50-70 AD) when Christians left synagogues,³⁹ they recited

³⁶ J.Kochuparampil, "Theology of Raze: The Mysteries of the Church in the East Syrian tradition", in P.Maniyattu, ed., *East Syrian Theology: An Introduction* (Satna, 2007) 253.

³⁷ See E.Shimun, trans., *The Book of Marganita (the pearl) on the Truth of Christianity* (Ernakulam, 1965) 45, 47.

³⁸ See B.Soro, "Understanding the Church of the East Sacramental Theology", *Syriac Dialogue* 4 (2001) 43-47.

³⁹ The Jewish Christians stopped visiting synagogues when a cursing formula was added against them in the twelfth benediction prayer (*Tefilla*) as, "Let the Christians and the apostates be destroyed in the twinkling of an eye; their names be removed from the book of life; and let them not be counted with the community of the just." See J.Blick, *Historical Information for New Testament Studies* (London 1967) 21; J.Vellian, *Ente Ormakai*, OIRSI 11 (Malayalam, Kottayam 1969) 15, no.12.

'Our Father' with the addition, 'for yours is the kingdom, power, and the glory for ever' (Deut 4:6-9), thrice a day at synagogue prayer times in the evening, morning, and noon.

2. Psalmody

Early Christians, imitating Christ (Mt 5:4; 7:23; 21:16; 22:45; 26:30; 27:46; Lk 24:44; Jn 10:14) prayed Psalms during liturgy. St. Paul and James advised Christians to pray Psalms (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16; Jam 5:13). According to Jerome (345-420), the land farmers and vineyard workers in Bethlehem used to hum

psalms while they worked, because the Christians knew the whole psalmody by heart.⁴⁰ Since Psalms contain the foretelling of salvation fulfilled in Christ,⁴¹ Christians pray Psalms with much devotion.

3. Hymns

St. Paul encouraged singing hymns in liturgy, since they serve the purpose of formatting faith in the redemptive works of Christ. Different types of hymns used in early liturgy that enriched the sacramental life of worshippers can be classified as follows.

Early Hymns	
Hymns	Purpose
Spiritual hymn (1 Tim 3:16) Passion hymn (2 Tim 2:11-13) Christological hymn (Col 1:15-20)	Used in Eucharistic celebration
Hymn of light (Eph 5:14)	Used in baptism
Self-emptying hymn (Phil 2:6-11)	Used in the breaking of bread
Thrice holy hymn (Is 6:3; Rev 4:8)	Used for praising God

4. Praising

Early Christians used abundantly the formulas of divine praises in their Christian gatherings. For them praisings were continual spiritual sacrifices offered to God (Heb 13:15) as rendering glory and honour to Him (Ph 2:11). They praised God for all His blessings (Eph 1:3) and wonderful works (Eph 3:20-21) on earth.

5. Blessing

Primary blessing formula was the Pauline greeting found at the beginning and the end of his epistles to different Christian communities in Corinth, Galatia, and Philippi. The same formula is used even today: "Let the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all; now, always, and for ever." Another formula was the risen Christ's greetings to the apostles, "Peace be with you" (Jn 20:19, 21, 26).

⁴⁰ Letter 16, *De sanctis locis*; PL 22, 491

⁴¹ Acts 2:25-28, 34-35; 4:11, 25-26.

Rev 1:5-8; 4:8-11; 5:12-14; 7:12; 19:1, 6.

6. Doxology

This prayer formula of glorifying God forever indicates the taking place of heavenly liturgy on earth. It offers glory, honour, thanksgiving, and adoration for the salvation granted through Christ. There are three types of such doxologies as Simple, solemn, and most solemn are the.

(a) Simple Form

It is the Trinitarian formula of praising found at the end of each Psalm as, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; from all eternity and for ever, Amen." In liturgy, it is found at the end of celebrant's prayers as, "The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit forever."

(b) Solemn Form

It is the angelic hymn sung by angels the nativity of Jesus, "Glory to God in the highest." It is used at the beginning of every liturgical service.

(c) Most solemn Form

It is the solemn acclamation of praising the Lord (*Qanona*) found at the end of each Eucharistic prayer (*G'hanta* in Anaphora), "We give you glory and honour, thanksgiving and adoration for all your favours and graces you have granted us, now, always and for ever." The book of Revelation provides many of such liturgical doxologies (Rev 1:5-8; 4:8-11; 5:12-14; 7:12; 19:1, 6).

7. Acclamations

It is a brief prayer formula of greeting, praying, or faith proclaiming as a congregational response of active

participation in liturgy. Most common of them are, 'Amen, Hallelujah, Hosanna, Thrice Holy, Forever and Ever.'

(a) Amen

This Hebrew word means "acceptance or assertion" to celebrant's or minister's statements. The 'Amen' at the end of each Eucharistic prayer (*G'hanta* in Anaphora) is known as the "Great Amen" of public faith affirmation. The word 'Amen' has various dimensions in the Old and New Testaments.

A. Old Testament

(1) Acceptance

It is a complete agreement to the word of the Lord. Jeremiah agreed fully to the Lord saying, "So be it, Lord" (Jer 11:5)

(2) Pledging

It is a solemn promise to the commands of the Lord: "The women shall say, 'Amen, Amen' (Num 5:22) and all the assembly said 'Amen' (Neh 5:13).

(3) Consent

It is a solemn approval to the demands of the Lord: "Lifting up hands all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen' (Neh 8:6). Each time "Amen" for eleven curses at Mount Ebal (Deut 27:15-26). All the people said "Amen" (1 Chr 16:37; Ps 106:48) and "Amen and Amen" (Ps 41:13; Ps 89:52).

B. New Testament

(1) Acceptance

It is the complete surrender to the supreme one: "How can outsiders say the 'Amen' to those who bless with the spirit (1

Cor 14:16) and the four living creatures said, "Amen" (Rev 5:14).

(2) Everlastingness

It is as an expression of everlasting blessing offered to the Lord: "Christ be blessed forever. Amen" (Rom 9:5). "To Him be glory forever. Amen" (Rom 11:36). "To the only wise God be glory for evermore through Jesus Christ. Amen" (Rom 16:27). "To whom be glory forever and ever. Amen" (Gal 1:5). "To Him be glory in the Church...forever and ever. Amen" (Eph 3:21). "To God and Father is glory for ever and ever. Amen" (Phil 4:20). "To the king of age, the only God, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen" (1 Tim 1:17). "To Him be honour and eternal domination. Amen" (1 Tim 6:16). "To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen" (2 Tim 4:18). "To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen" (Heb 13:21). "To Him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen" (1 Pet 4:11; 5:11). "To Him be glory and domination forever and ever. Amen" (Rev 1:6). "To the only God, our Saviour, be glory, majesty...and authority now and forever. Amen" (Jude 1:25).

(3) Universality

It is an expression of offering unceasing prayers and greetings to all: "The God of peace be with you all. Amen" (Rom 15:33). "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen" (Gal 6:18).

(b) Alleluia

The Hebrew word Alleluia or Hallelujah means 'Praise the Lord' and was used for praising in jubilation as the foretasting of the

eternal gladness of the elected ones in heaven. The word 'allelujah' has various dimensions in Old and New Testaments.

A. Old Testament

(1) Request to Praise

Alleluia in the beginning of Psalms indicates the request for praising the Lord: "Praise the Lord! Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good" (Ps 106:1). "Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart" (Ps 111:1). "Praise the Lord! Blessed is the man who fears the Lord" (Ps 112:1). "Praise the Lord! Praise O servants of the Lord" (Ps 134:1). "Praise the Lord! Praise the name of the Lord" (Ps 135:1). "Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!" (Ps 146:1). "Praise the Lord! Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!" (Ps 147:1). "Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens" (Ps 148:1). "Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song" (Ps 149:1). "Praise the Lord! Praise God in His sanctuary" (Ps 150:1).

(2) Concluding Formula

Alleluia at the end of Psalms indicates the official ending of praising: "Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord!" (Ps 104:35). "To the end that they should keep His statutes, Praise the Lord!" (Ps 105:45). "Let all people say, 'Amen' Praise the Lord!" (Ps 106:48). "He gives the barren woman a home, Praise the Lord" (Ps 113:9). "We will bless the Lord from this time forth; Praise the Lord!" (Ps 115:18). "In the courts of the house of the Lord, Praise the Lord!" (Ps 116:19). "The faithfulness of the Lord endures forever, Praise the Lord!" (Ps 117:2). "The Lord will reign forever, Praise the Lord! (Ps

146:10). "He has not dealt with any other nation, Praise the Lord!" (Ps 147:20). "Praise for all His saints, Praise the Lord!" (Ps 148:14). "This is glory for all His faithful ones, Praise the Lord" (Ps 149:9). "Let everything that breaths praise the Lord! Praise the Lord" (Ps 150:6).

(3) Jubilation

Alleluia as a joyful shouting of triumph signifies welcoming recognition: "All her lanes will cry Alleluia and will give praise, saying, 'Blessed is God, who has exalted you for ever'" (Tob 13:18).

B. New Testament

Victory Song

It is the victory Song in heaven as an unending heavenly jubilation of victorious Church, praising the Lord in adoration forever: "Alleluia! Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God" (Rev 19:1). "Twenty-four elders and the four living creatures... worshipped... Amen. Alleluia" (Rev 19:4).

(c) Hosanna

The Hebrew word 'Hosanna' means, "save, we pray or may God save" and signifies the triumphal shouting of joy: "Save us, we beseech thee, O Lord" (Ps 117:25). "Hosanna to the Son of David... Hosanna in the highest" (Mt 21:9).

Since Christ was the one who came in the name of the Lord (Ps 117:26), it was quite natural for the people to shout this phrase at

His triumphal entry to Jerusalem considering Him as the promised Saviour (Mt 21:9). In the East Syriac Eucharistic celebration, this joyful acclamation of praising is sung as the doxology at the end of the second Eucharistic prayer.⁴²

(d) Thrice Holy (*Trisagion*)

It is the foretaste of the everlasting angelic hymn sung in adoration and praising the Lord in heaven: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts" (Is 6:3): "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty" (Rev 4:8).

The introductory hymn of the liturgy of the Word, and the end doxology (*Qanona*) of the second Eucharistic prayer in the Eucharistic celebration of the Syro-Malabar Church use this thrice-holy expression.⁴³

(e) Forever and Ever

This expression taken from Psalms indicates the everlasting character of divine doxologies: "Thou hast blotted out their name forever and ever" (Ps 9:5). "The Lord sits enthroned forever" (Ps 9:7). "The hope of the poor shall not perish forever" (Ps 9:18). 'Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen' (Rom 1:25). 'He who is blessed for ever' (1 Cor 11:31). 'Glory and might forever and ever' (Rev 5:13). "He shall reign forever and ever" (Rev 11:15).

d. Divine Praises (Liturgy of the Hours)

Liturgy of the hours is the official prayer system of the Church at set times in different

⁴² *The Order of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana* (Kakkanad 2005) 51.

⁴³ *The Order of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana*, 27, 51.

Churches as the continual voice of the Bride addressed to her Groom where Christ Himself, together with His Mystical Body, prays to the Father (SC 84, 90). The various names of this prayer system are the 'liturgy of the hours' (set time prayers), 'divine praises' (perpetual praising), 'sacrifice of praise' (spiritual sacrifice), 'divine office' (holy prayer service), 'canonical prayer' (official prayer service), and 'breviary' (shortened prayer service).

(1). Evolution

The prayer life of Israel started with God's covenant, "I am your God, and you are my people."⁴⁴ Then onwards they decided to keep up an intimate relationship with God. For this purpose they established the times and places of prayer for daily worship in praising the Lord. Thus, they wanted to become a nation of God through the daily routine of praising, thanking, glorifying, and worshipping the Lord being steadfast to His promise.

They prayed seven times a day (Ps 118:164). The importance of number seven

as perfect number was derived from the six days of creation followed by a seventh day of rest as the sign of completion or perfection of God's work (Gen 2:1-3),⁴⁵ in order to sanctify life throughout the day and night. Thus, they prayed two times in the temple – morning and evening sacrifices (Ex 29:38-41, 30:7-8; Num. 28:3-8; Ps 55:17); three times in synagogues (Ps 55:17; Dan 6:10) – third hour at 9 a.m., sixth hour at 12 noon, and ninth hour at 3 p.m.; and two times at homes – before and after sleep (Deut 6:7; 11:19) interlinked with midnight (Ps 118:62).

(2) Christian Prayer Times

Early Christians followed the same Jewish tradition in imitation of Jesus and the apostles.⁴⁶ Accordingly the Christianity kept up the seven set times of prayers stressing the relevance of Jesus in those times. Biblically the whole night and day is divided into eight parts as four night-watches and four day-hours with proper prayer systems related to the economy of salvation fulfilled in Christ in those times as shown in the table below.⁴⁷

4 Watches and 4 Hours							
1st Watch	2nd Watch	3rd Watch	4th Watch	1st Hour	3rd Hour	6th Hour	9th Hour
6 p.m - 9 p.m.	9 p.m. - 12 a.m.	12 a.m. - 3 a.m.	3 a.m.-6 a.m.	6 a.m.	9 a.m.	12 p.m.	3 p.m.
Vespers	Compline	Nocturnes	Vigil	Matins	Terce	Sext	None

⁴⁴ Ex 19:5-6; Deut 7:6, 29:13-14; Ez 36:28; Lev 26:12; Jer 11:4.

⁴⁵ For the historical and hypothetical significance of number seven in every culture, religion and bible, see 'Seven' in J.L.McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (London, 1975) 794

⁴⁶ Mt 4:23; 12:9; 13:54; Mk 1:21; Lk 4:16; 24:53; Jn 18:20; Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:12; 10:9; 12:5; 13:13-14; 16:13; 17:1-3; 18:4; 24:53.

⁴⁷ J.Moolan, "Jesus and the Set Times of the Liturgy of the Hours," *CO* 29.1 (2009) 28-38.

The whole Christendom today maintains seven times of prayer system suppressing one of the little hours marked as absent in the table below.

Seven Set Prayer Times in Different Churches						
8 Parts of the day	East Syrians	West Syrians	Alexandrians	Armenians	Byzantines	Latins
1. First Watch: Vespers						
2. Second Watch: Compline						
3. Third Watch: Nocturnes						
4. Fourth Watch: Vigil		Absent				Absent
5. First Hour: Matins						
6. Third Hour: Terce						
7. Sixth Hour: Sext						
8. Ninth Hour: None	Absent		Absent	Absent	Absent	

(3) Syro-Malabar Church

Faithful to the East Syriac Tradition, codified by Isho-Yahb III (647-657/58) the daily seven times of prayer in Syro-Malabar Church are, 1) Vespers (*Ramsha* –evening), 2) Compline (*Subba'a* –plenitude/satisfaction), 3) Nocturnes (*Lehya* –night), 4) Vigil (*Qala d'sabra* –call at dawn), 5) Matins/lauds/prime (*Sapra* –morning), 6) Terce (*Quta'a* –third hour), 7) Sext (*Endana* –sixth hour). They have combined the 'none' (*Batsba shayin* –ninth hour) prayer with vespers in order to retain the seven set times of prayer a day. The compline is given only for the three-day fast of the Rogation of Ninevites and for the period of Great Fast. The terce and sext are given only for the period of Great Fast.⁴⁸

The Psalter of the office contains 150 Psalms and 3 Old Testament canticles of *Psita* (simple) version. 150 *mazmore* (singing – psalms) are divided into 57 *marmyata* (exaltation –psalmody/collection of psalms) of 20 *hullale* (praising –collection of *marmyata*); and the 3 canticles are divided into 3 *marmyata* of 1 *hullala*. Thus, altogether there are 60 *marmyata* of 21 *hullale*. The three canticles are 1) The victory song of Moses (Ex 15:1-21) and the triumphal hymn of Isaiah (Is 42:10-13; 45:8), 2) The song of Moses on God, the creator and the protector (Deut 32:1-21b), and 3) The song of Moses on God the powerful One (Deut 32: 21c-43).

e. Liturgical Year

The liturgical year is the yearly plan of the Church for her children arranged in

⁴⁸ P.Bedjan, *Breviarium juxta Ritus Syrorum Orientalium id est Chaldaeorum*, 3 vols. (Syriac, Rome, 1886-1887); J.Moolan, "The Evolution of the East Syrian Divine Office in the Syro-Malabar Church," *CO* 29.2 (2008) 66-82; Id., *The Liturgy of the Hours: Syro-Malabar Church*, OIRSI 289 (Kottayam, 2016) 2nd published.

different seasons or periods together with feasts, fasts⁴⁹ and abstinence in order to live up the mysteries of Christ in daily life to make a successful pilgrimage to heaven.

(1) Evolution

The formation of the General structure of the liturgical year in the Church took place in due course of centuries.⁵⁰ The very first development in this regard was the first century development of Sunday worship as the day of the Lord stressing resurrection, the redemption of humanity.⁵¹ Another outcome of this period was the Christian participation in Jewish feasts with Christian sense.⁵²

During the second century, Pasch/Easter became the very first annual feast of Christianity.⁵³ The third century development was the two days of fast on Good Friday

and Holy Saturday as the Bride's (Church) mourning at her Groom's (Christ) departure,⁵⁴ and its later extension to six days before Pasch stressed the process of Christian purification process in preparation for the great feast of resurrection.⁵⁵ Another development of Wednesday and Friday fasts commemorating the suffering and death of Christ indicated the importance of those days in the weekly cycle.⁵⁶ The martyrs' memory developed at this period paved the way for the commemoration of saints in the Church calendar.⁵⁷

The fourth century independence of the Church from persecutions acquired the freedom of worship. Development of forty days fast within six, seven, or eight weeks, imitating Jesus' fast in the wilderness, aimed at a good preparation for the great feast of Easter.⁵⁸ Different feasts of the Lord like,

⁴⁹ J.Moolan, "Fasting and Repentance in the Period of Great Fast", *Paurastya Vidyapitham 2003: Completing 20 Years* (Kottayam, 2003) 88-90; Id., "Penitential Life and Healing Power Among the Thomas Christians," *CO* 26.2 (2006) 59-68.

⁵⁰ J.Moolan, "Evolution of the Church Calendar," *CO* 32.2 (2011) 61-85.

⁵¹ Justin, 1 *Apology* 67; Tertullian, *de Cor.* 3; *De Orat.* 23; Cassian, *Institutes* 2.18; Council of Nicaea, *canon* 20.

⁵² R.de Vaux, *Ancient Israel: Its Life and Institutions* (London, 1961) 484-517; A.Adam, *The Liturgical Year* (New York, 1981) 9-16.

⁵³ T.J.Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (Collegeville, 1986) 1-26. A.Adam, *The Liturgical Year*, 57-63.

⁵⁴ A.Reiferscheid, G.Vissowa, eds., *Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertulliani opera*, Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 20.1 (Vindobonae, 1890) 291-293; B.Botte, *Hippolyte de Rome: la Tradition Apostolique*, SChr. 11 (Paris, 1946) 47-49, 64-65, no. 20, 29.

⁵⁵ A.Vööbus, ed., *The 'Didascalia Apostolorum' in Syriac*, Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Scriptores Syri 179 (Louvain, 1979) 214; M.Routh, *Reliquiae Sacrae*, vol. 3 (Oxonii, 1847) 229.

⁵⁶ *Didache* 8.1; Tertullian, *De Orat.* 19; *Didascalia Apostolorum* 5.21.

⁵⁷ T.Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy*, 87.

⁵⁸ Athanasius, *Epistolae Heortasticae* 2.8, in anno 330; PG 26, 1371; Cyril, *Procatechesis* 4; PG 33, 340; Chrysostom, *Adversus Judaeos* 3.4; PG 48, 865f; Basil, *Homilia* 14, in *ebriosos*; PG 31, 444; Etherie, *Journal de voyage*, ed., H.Petre, *Sources Chrétienne* 21 (Paris, 1947) 207-209.

Nativity-Epiphany, Pasch, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, Exaltation of the Cross, feast of Elia, and the Dedication of the Church paved the way for the concerned liturgical seasons. The calculation of the date of Easter on the Sunday following the full moon after March 21 unified the whole Christendom in this regard.⁵⁹

Fifth to sixth century Christological controversies paved the way for the calculation of Christmas date on December 25,⁶⁰ and of Marian feasts like *Theotokos* (God bearer) on Sunday before Christmas, Annunciation on March 25, Assumption (Dormition) on August 15, and her Nativity on September 8.⁶¹ This period defined the sense of every feast to the experience of Christ, as the *anamnesis* (commemoration) of the real continuity of the economy of salvation in day-to-day life.

Seventh to tenth centuries are known as the dark ages of liturgy. Though the iconoclasm condemned the making of any lifeless image or statue,⁶² they appeared in

abundance like sculptures, statues, and crucifixes, forgetting the divine sense of appeal to the eternal living presence of Christ. Christ can never be limited to history alone, because He is above history, the super power over everything. Hence, both vertical as well as horizontal dimensions of salvation history have to be equally stressed in the economy of salvation.

From the ninth century onwards, the West started to celebrate saints on Sundays, but the East maintaining the privileged position of Sunday as the day of the Lord, only those feasts connected with the mysteries of Christ were celebrated on Sundays,⁶³ because the Eucharist made Sunday a day of revelation or epiphany in the Church.⁶⁴

Protestant reformation from fourteenth to sixteenth centuries paved the way for sanctuary system of maintaining special chapels for the preservation of the Eucharist representing the perpetual presence of Christ in the sacrament of Eucharist even after the celebration. This prompted to give shape to

⁵⁹ M. Righetti, *Manuale di storia liturgica* II (Milan, 1955) 208-209.

⁶⁰ Augustine, *De Trinitate* 5.9; PL 42, 894; John Chrysostom. *In diem Natalem D.N. Jesu Christi*; PG 49, 357-358; Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Topographie chretienne*, ed. W. Wolska-Consus, SChr. 159 (Paris, 1970) 21-23.

⁶¹ J. Kottackal, *Behold Your Mother: Mariological Studies*, OIRSI (Kottayam, 1999) 82-91; C. Payngot, *Thirunalukal*, 317-339, 343-344.

⁶² A. Bryer, J. J. Herrin, eds., *Iconoclasm* (Birmingham, 1977); B. Alain, *The Forbidden Image: An Intellectual History of Iconoclasm* (Chicago, 2000); T. F. X. Noble, *Images, Iconoclasm, and the Carolingians* (Pennsylvania, 2009).

⁶³ P. G. Cobb, "The History of the Christian Year," in C. Jones G. Wainwright, E. Yarnold, eds., *The Study of the Liturgy* (London, 1993) 405.

⁶⁴ P. Bradshaw, *Early Christian Worship: A Basic Introduction to Ideas and Practice* (London, 1996) 78.

different types of Eucharistic devotions in the Latin Church.

In short, the major liturgical developments that took place up to the sixteenth century are the basis for the present setting up of liturgical calendars in different Churches in both the East⁶⁵ and West.⁶⁶

(2) Syro-Malabar Church

Following the East Syriac Tradition,⁶⁷ the Syro-Malabar Church has an excellent arrangement of liturgical year into nine liturgical seasons or periods.⁶⁸ The seasons are fixed systematically in the line of saving acts of Christ on earth and heaven. The period of Annunciation-Nativity (*Subara-Yalda*)⁶⁹ presents the mystery of incarnation where begins a new era of peace and hope in salvation. The period of Epiphany (*Denba*) reveals the great mystery of Triune God to humankind. The period of Great Fast (*Sauma Ramba*) invites to participate in the mystery of passion and death of Christ through prayer, fast, penance and repentance. The

period of Resurrection (*Qyamta*) helps us to enter into the mystery of redemption through the victory over death and sin by acquiring a new life in Jesus. The period of Apostles (*Shlibe*) manifests the mystery of the power of the Holy Spirit. The period of summer (*Qayta*) manifests the mystery of the growth of the Church in faith and sanctity, as true Christian witnessing of Christ to the world. The periods of *Elia-Sliba* (Cross) and Moses (*Musbe*) manifest the final return of Christ to the Church with Elia and Moses at His second coming to pronounce the final verdict upon the world. In the period of Dedication of the Church (*Quddash Edta*) Christ manifests the glory of the Church, His Spouse, by making her sit at His right hand and allowing her to enjoy the glory of His Kingdom.

(3) Salvation Mystery Setup

The first apostolic proclamations of the salvation mysteries contained their life experience of Christ as God incarnated, revealed, suffered, died, raised, ascended and

⁶⁵www. G:\Armenian Calendar.mht; www. G:\Byzantine Calendar.mht; www. G:\Coptic Calendar.mht; www. G:\East Syrian Calendar.mht; <http://www.G:\Ethiopian Calendar.mht>; <http://www.G:\West Syrian Calendar.mht>, accessed on 10.5.2016.

⁶⁶ www.G:\The Latin liturgical year.htm, accessed on 10.5.2016.

⁶⁷ P.Bedjan, *Breviarium juxta Ritum Syrorum Orientalium id est Chaldaeorum*, 3 vols. (Syriac, Rome, 1886-1887).

⁶⁸J.Moolan, *The Period of Annunciation-Nativity in the East Syrian Calendar*, 11-56; Id., "The History and Structure of the Syro-Malabar Liturgical Seasons," *CO* 25.2 (2004) 83-96; Id., "Historical and Structural Evolution of Syro-Malabar Liturgical Year," *Malabar Theological Review* 4.2 (2009) 160-174; Id. *Liturgical Year: Syro-Malabar Church* OIRSI 380 (Kottayam, 2014) 2nd published.

⁶⁹J.Moolan, "Theological Analysis of the Period of Annunciation in the East and West Syrian Tradition", in G. Panicker, J. Thekeparampil, A. Kalakudy, B. Varghese, eds., *The Harp: A Review of Syriac and Oriental Ecumenical Studies* 21 –Festschrift:Rev.Fr.Emmanuel Thelly, (Kottayam, 2006) 361-382.

will come again at the end of the world. The Syro-Malabar Eucharistic celebration and the propers of the liturgical seasons are well

collaborated with six themes of apostolic proclamations in correspondence with mystery themes as shown in the table below.⁷⁰

Syro-Malabar Liturgy Setup

Themes of First Ap. Proclamations	Euch. Celebration	Liturgical Seasons	Mystery Themes
1. Incarnation: Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 2:17-22, 25-31;10:37;13:16-25)	1. Introductory rite	1. Annunciation-Nativity	1. Incarnation
2. Revelation: Public life (Acts 2: 22;10:38-39;13:26-27)	2. Liturgy of the Word	2. <i>Denha</i>	2. Revelation: Public life
3. Passion, death, burial (Acts 2:23; 10:39;13:27-29)	3. Preparation Rite	3. Great Fast	3. Passion, death, burial
4. Resurrection, Pentecost (Acts 2: 24-23;10:40-41;13:30-37)	4. Anaphora or <i>Quddasa</i>	4. Resurrection 5. <i>Sliha</i>	4. Resurrection 5. Pentecost
5. Reconciliation and witnessing Acts 2:23;10:42-43;13:38-41)	5. Reconciliation rite 6. Communion rite 7. Concluding rite	6. <i>Qaita</i> 7. Elia-Cross 8. Moses 9. Dedication of the Church	6. Transfiguration 7. Exaltaion of the Cross 8 Parousia

Conclusion

In the New Testament, Messiah proclaimed the words sacraments, which later derived into the process of the administration of them. The apostles started to administer sacraments in rudimentary forms without any fixed structure and setup. The celebrant shaped prayers at the spur of the moment for the purpose of the concerned celebrations. Hence, this stage of the liturgy was known as the fluid stage in convenience to occasions where it was administered.

Jerusalem was the centre of liturgy, and the Jerusalem Church was the mother Church of all other Churches. The freedom movement in the Church during the fourth century made the Golden age of the

Jerusalem liturgy. The Muslim conquests in the second half of the fourth century made an end to the Jerusalem liturgy and the Jerusalem Church by the fifth century.

The lack of eyewitness to Christ works, and the fourth to sixth centuries' development of heresies and schisms necessitated the stable forms and structure of liturgy. Theological centres in both the East and West gave shape to the stable stage of liturgy. Certain biblical prayer forms found their way ever fixed in liturgy. The formation of canons or anaphoras, the setting up of the prayer system of divine praises, and the evolution of the liturgical year took place during the ecclesial period. In this regard, the Syro-Malabar liturgy setup needs special attention for its authenticity and adaptations.

⁷⁰ V.Pathikulangara, *Qurbana*, Denha Services 48 (Kottayam, 1998) 93

Eucharist: The Sacrament of Communion and Sharing

A Critical Appraisal of the Eucharistic Theology of Tissa Balasuriya

Dr. Sebastian Chalakkal

1. Introduction

In the contemporary period the Liberation theologians highlighted the social and communitarian aspects of the Eucharist. They tried to re-interpret the doctrines of Eucharistic theology in relation to the social issues of the day. It was argued that the sacraments should not be seen as private acts of prayer, but as actions of Jesus Christ, the liberator.¹ Tissa Balasuriya (1924-2013),² a Sri Lankan Roman Catholic priest and theologian, interprets the meaning of the Eucharist in relation to the concrete life

situations of the people. This article is a critical appraisal of the Eucharistic theology of Tissa Balasuriya. After presenting the focal elements of the Eucharistic theology of Balasuriya, we critically assess them on the basis of the Sacred Scripture, the Sacred Tradition and the *magisterium* of the Church. The article concludes with some reflections on the Church's Eucharistic life.

2. The Eucharistic Theology of Tissa Balasuriya

Balasuriya argues that theology must pay more attention to all aspects of the human

¹ K. B. Osborne, *Sacramental Theology: A General Introduction*, New York: Paulist Press, 1988, 17-18.

² Tissa Balasuriya OMI (1924-2013) was born at Kahatagasdigiliya, a village near Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. He studied theology at the Gregorian University, Rome, economics at Oxford and theology and sociology at the Catholic Institute, Paris. He entered the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) in 1965. He was the rector of Aquinas University College, Colombo. He served as the Asian Chaplain of the International Catholic Student Movement. He founded the Centre for Society and Religion at Talahena and later at Colombo. Balasuriya is a founder-member of EATWOT (the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians). For some of his theological views which were not in consonance with the official teachings of the Catholic Church, he was excommunicated from the Catholic Church on 2 January 1997. A year later, on 15 January 1998, he was reconciled with the Church and the excommunication was rescinded. Balasuriya is a prolific writer. His works include *Jesus Christ and Human Liberation*, Sri Lanka: Centre for Society and Religion Publication, 1976; *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, New York: Orbis Books, 1979; *Planetary Theology*, London: SCM Press, 1984; *Mary and Human Liberation*, Colombo: Centre for Society and Religion, Double Issue of *Logos* 29.1&2, 1990; *Globalization and Human Solidarity*, Tiruvalla: Christava Sahitya Samithi, 2000. Balasuriya died in Colombo on January 17, 2013, at the age of 89. Cf. John C. England et. al. (eds.), *Asian Christian Theologies: A Research Guide to Authors, Movements, Sources*, Delhi: ISPCK, 2002, 487-490; Georg Evers, "The Excommunication of Tissa Balasuriya: A Warning to Asian Theologians?", *Jeevadhara* (1997), 212-230.

persons and orient towards justice in the society. Theology must become relevant to the concerns and struggles of the people and it must be action-oriented.³ He reflects over some specific areas in connection with Eucharist: the origins of the Eucharist and its history down the centuries, the significance of the Eucharist in modern society, Eucharist and priesthood and Eucharistic celebration against the background of other cultures and religions.

2.1. The Origins of the Eucharist

Balasuriya finds the meaning of Eucharist fundamentally in the self-oblation of Jesus for the cause of integral human liberation. To Jesus' mind, the Eucharist was essentially action-oriented. It was a prayer and offering of Jesus.⁴ For Jesus, Eucharist was a supreme act of concern for others and of sharing. He was not merely giving bread; He gave His life for the liberation of others.⁵ The early Christians understood the deep meaning of the Eucharist. Christianity meanwhile was a dynamic movement of human liberation from selfishness and exploitation. They were ready to lead a life of sharing. The Eucharistic celebration was the public worship of the whole community of believers. The social and collective nature of the Eucharist was lived, that all shared in the Eucharistic bread, as a

sign of the communion among themselves in Jesus. The sense of being members of one body in Jesus Christ was very strong among believers.⁶ For them the celebration of the Eucharist was intimately connected with the sharing of bread. They practiced what they professed.⁷

Balasuriya observes that the understanding concerning the Eucharist has not always been the same throughout the centuries. The Eucharist has always remained central to Christianity; but the meaning of the Eucharist has been altered by the social pressures.⁸ The Christian tradition has largely diluted or neglected the aspect of sharing in the Eucharist over the centuries and the accent was, rather, on the real presence of Christ under the form of bread and wine and in the tabernacle.⁹

2.2. The Significance of the Eucharist

Balasuriya speaks of the several aspects of the Eucharist. First, it is the meal, the celebration of the Jewish Pasch, the festivity which recalls the liberation by God. Second, it is the presence of Jesus because Jesus said "this is my body". The most important aspect of this presence is that Jesus is inviting us to a response to his sacrifice and a commitment to the society of our time. Third, the Eucharist

³ Tissa Balasuriya, *Planetary Theology*, London: SCM Press, 1984, 10.

⁴ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, New York: Orbis Books, 1979, 16-17; hereafter cited as Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*.

⁵ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 80.

⁶ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 25, 27.

⁷ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 80.

⁸ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 2.

⁹ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 33.

is the memorial of the passion and death of Jesus. Fourth, the Eucharist is the renewal of the covenant. It is the promise of God to redeem humankind in the blood of Christ.¹⁰ Of these different aspects, Balasuriya emphasises the aspect of Eucharist as the sacrament of communion and sharing.

Balasuriya points out the significance of the Eucharist in modern society especially in the third world. According to him, our Eucharistic celebration should lead to commitment. All other external factors such as colourful and rich vestments, beautiful music, display of decorations or the gathering of vast crowds are useful only if the celebration of the Eucharist leads to a meaning in life. "The Eucharist is spiritual food insofar as it leads to greater love, self-unity, and communion among persons and groups. Today this requires love among persons and an effective action for justice. The Eucharist must also lead us to a response to the sufferings of the masses, often caused by people who take a prominent part in the Eucharist. Unless there is this twofold dimension of personal love and societal action, the Eucharist can be a sacrilege."¹¹

Balasuriya argues that Eucharist must be a dynamic of social change. Eucharist cannot be well celebrated without respect for human

persons. Eucharistic celebration demands the championing of human rights. Therefore, Eucharistic celebration is a permanent challenge to the followers of Jesus.¹² "The Eucharist has to be related positively to human liberation if it is to be faithful to its origins and its performance. It has to lead Christian communities to analyze the issues which confront persons and the human community today, to an unmasking of injustices and building groups for liberation."¹³

Balasuriya is of the opinion that Eucharistic celebration will become more meaningful if the community which celebrates the Eucharist becomes more committed to each other and society. The Eucharistic community has to be a conscious, reflective, action-oriented group and not just a collection of individuals who come together merely for the ceremonial observance. The building up of a real sharing community is very important. A meaningful Eucharist, therefore, requires freedom, spontaneity, interpersonal communication, authenticity and a genuine relationship of love and justice.¹⁴ "If there is to be truthfulness in the celebration, the Eucharist should deepen faith and commitment. It should tend toward effective building of unity, first among those who participate in the Eucharist and thereby the rest of society."¹⁵

¹⁰ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 17.

¹¹ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 21-22.

¹² Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 84.

¹³ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 128.

¹⁴ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 130-131.

¹⁵ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 128.

According to Balasuriya, the Eucharistic celebration has an extraordinary potential for transforming persons and communities.

Every week about 200 million persons meet all over the world in Christian communities. The Sunday celebration is perhaps the most numerous regular gathering of human beings around a common theme that this world knows. If it is vitalized into being truly a sacrament of communion through effective sharing, it can be the most efficacious means of bringing about the radical Cultural Revolution required among Christians. And if Christians practice what the Lord has taught, many of the world's problems would be solved both at a structural and personal level.¹⁶

Balasuriya points out that the present world order is contrary to the values of the Eucharist. Eucharist is the sacrament of loving sharing. But the present world system is greedily exploitative. Eucharist builds community; but the world relations are destroying persons and people. Eucharist is universalist; but the world is racist. Eucharist motivates humble service, but arrogant domination prevails over the world. Since the Eucharist is the sacrament of unity, it must

also be the sacrament of world justice.¹⁷ Eucharist has to be related to new needs such as "Personal fulfillment with freedom and responsibility, the realization of the values of justice, truth, freedom, love, equality, and peace within human societies, the building of a just world order and a new humanity, communion with cultures, religions, and ideologies that are not of Christian inspiration and the growth of the Christian communion in the service of the human person and the world."¹⁸

2.3. Eucharist and Priesthood

Balasuriya remarks that the life style of the clergy has a relation to the way the Eucharist is celebrated.¹⁹ The role of the priest is not merely to preside over the Eucharistic celebration, but to involve in the Eucharistic community to build up love and justice in it. For this a renewal in the life style of the priest is needed. The priest should become the true animator of a real community of love and sharing and not merely the functional president of a ritual.²⁰ The priests exercise a privileged position in the liturgy. People respect the priest for his role, especially in the Eucharist. They do not get the same respect outside the

¹⁶ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 132.

¹⁷ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 141-143.

¹⁸ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 133.

¹⁹ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 116.

²⁰ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 131-132.

liturgical framework. Many priests are not capable of other roles in personal relations or social groups.²¹

2.4. Eucharist against the Background of Other Cultures and Religions

Balasuriya advocates the cultural integration of Christianity in Asian cultures, including the Eucharistic celebration. He believes that simplicity in dress and lifestyle can help the cultural integration of Christians. One of the characteristics of the oriental cultures is their emphasis on simplicity. They wear simple dress for the religious services. The Christian churches shall not be the places for fashion trend-setting and ostentation.²² Balasuriya thinks that the use of wine in the Eucharistic celebration is not conducive to the

Asian culture and it is high time to think about other alternatives.²³

He is also of the opinion that Christians must be ready to accept the values in other religions, even in liturgy.²⁴ He asks: "Would it not be possible for passages from the sacred writings of the East to be included in the readings for the Divine Office and in the service of the Word?"²⁵

3. Critical Appraisal of the Eucharistic Theology of Tissa Balasuriya

Balasuriya was right in pointing out that the celebration of the Eucharist was intimately related to the communion and the fellowship of the early Christians. The concept of communion (*koinonia*) was central to the understanding of the sacrament of Eucharist

²¹ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 123. Balasuriya questions the teaching put forward by the Congregation for the doctrine of the Faith that the priests should be males in order to be like Jesus. He argues that Jesus was not an ordained minister of the Christian religion; therefore it does not seem to be a valid conclusion from the masculinity of Jesus of Nazareth to argue that women cannot be priests in the Catholic Church. Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 55. The declaration *Inter Insigniores* (15th October, 1976) of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith argued that the priest must have a natural resemblance to Christ, and the male sex is constitutive of this resemblance. Balasuriya's position regarding the question of the admission of women to the ministerial priesthood is rejected by the Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* on 22 May 1994 issued by Pope John Paul II. It clearly taught that the Church has no authority to confer priestly ordination on women. Pope Francis in the recent Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* teaches that the reservation of the priesthood to males is not a question open to discussion. Pope also notes that the ministerial priesthood is one means employed by Jesus for the service of his people, yet our great dignity derives from baptism, which is accessible to all. The function of ministerial priesthood is totally ordered to the holiness of Christ's members. The configuration of the priest to Christ does not imply an exaltation which would set him above others. Its key and axis is not power understood as domination, but the power to administer the sacrament of the Eucharist, which is always a service to God's people (*Evangelii Gaudium* 104).

²² Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 149.

²³ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 150.

²⁴ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 154-155.

²⁵ Balasuriya, *The Eucharist and Human Liberation*, 159.

and in the life of the early Christian community. We read in the Acts of the Apostles about the life of communion and sharing of the early Church. Those who “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread” (Acts 2: 42) were also ready to share everything they had with others. “The whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common” (Acts 4:32). The early Christians clearly understood the deep meaning of the Eucharist instituted by Jesus.

St. Paul adequately underscored the aspects of sharing and communion in Eucharistic celebration. In 1Cor 10:16-17 sharing in the Eucharistic bread and cup is interpreted as *koinonia* in the body and blood of Christ. Through the Eucharist, a Christian is united to Christ. The unity of the Church is effected through the Eucharist. Through the Eucharist all become one body.²⁶ St. Paul criticized the abuses and the divisions among

the Christians (1Cor 11:20-23). He insists on the fact that there can be no real Eucharist without the love of neighbour. Eucharist is communion with Christ and with all the members of His body. By becoming united to Christ, we also become united to the members of Christ’s body. He reminded the Corinthians that becoming one body implies a serious obligation towards the poor and the needy.²⁷

From *Didache* we get information about the life of communion and sharing of the early Christians. It teaches that the disunity among the participants of the Eucharist is equal to defiling the Eucharistic sacrifice.²⁸ Fathers of the Church have adequately emphasized the communitarian and social aspects of the Eucharist. For example, in his *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, St. John Chrysostom explained that the greed of the rich is the origin of social inequalities. He exhorted the Christians, who participate in one chalice during the Eucharist, to practise charity. Chrysostom was convinced that liturgy and

²⁶ W. R. Crockett, *Eucharist: Symbol of Transformation*, New York: Puebla Publications, 1989, 29-31.

²⁷ J. Grassi, *Broken Bread and Broken Bodies: The Lord’s Supper and World Hunger*, New York: Orbis Books, 2004, 87.

²⁸ “On every Lord’s Day, after you have assembled, break the bread and give thanks, first confessing your sins, that your sacrifice may be pure. Let no one who has a quarrel with his neighbour gather with you before they are reconciled, lest your sacrifice be profaned (cf Mt 5.23ff). For this is what the Lord said: ‘In every place and time a pure sacrifice is offered to me, for I am a great king, says the Lord, and my name is wonderful among the gentiles’ (cf Mal 1:11-14). As cited in D. J. Sheerin, *The Eucharist, The Message of the Fathers of the Church*, Vol. 7, Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1986, 284.

justice should go together. He insisted that the Eucharistic celebration should have an impact on the way a person leads his life. Christians should have concern for the poor and they have to work for the upliftment of the poor.²⁹

Thus in the first centuries, the communitarian and sharing aspects of the Eucharist were duly emphasized by the Church. Eucharistic celebration was a social act and it demanded service of others and sharing of one's self.

One can note a shift of emphasis in the Eucharistic theology during the Middle Ages. Attention was turned to doctrinal matters during this period. The use of Aristotelian philosophy gave new thought forms and new vocabulary to Eucharistic theology. The centre of attention became the doctrines of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist. This concern with defining and clarifying the doctrine of the Eucharist reached its zenith during the

Scholastic period of the 13th and 14th centuries. During this period the theologians strived to find a metaphysical explanation for the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.³⁰

The teaching of the Council of Trent on the Eucharist was a response to the teachings of the Reformers. Therefore, little attention was given to the various aspects of the Eucharist. Two issues that were treated in depth in the Council of Trent were the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and the sacrificial aspect of the Mass. The Council did not attempt a complete exposition of the doctrine on the Eucharist. Its primary intention was to defend the Church's doctrine on the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist, which was denied by the Reformers.³¹ In short, during the Middle Ages, in its attempt to safeguard the doctrines of the real presence of the Lord in the Eucharist and the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, not much attention was paid to the communitarian and social aspects of the Eucharist.

²⁹ "God has given to us but one habitation, this earth, has distributed all things equally, has lighted one sun for us all, has spread above us one roof, the sky, made one table, the earth, bear food for us. And another table (Eucharist) has He given for better than this, yet that too is one, (those who share our mysteries understand my words), one manner of birth he has bestowed on all, the spiritual, we all have one country, that in the heavens, of the same cup drink we all. He has not bestowed on the rich man a gift more abundant and more honourable, and on the poor one more mean and small, but he has called all alike. He has given carnal things with equal regard to all, and spiritual in like manner. Whence then proceeds the great inequality of conditions in life? From the avarice and the pride of the wealthy. But let not, brethren, let not this any longer be; and when matter of universal interest and more pressing necessity bring us together, let us not be divided by things earthly and insignificant: I mean by wealth and poverty, by bodily relationship, by enmity and friendship; for all these things are a shadow, nay less substantial than a shadow, to those who possess the bond of charity from above." As cited in L. Fernando, "The Eucharist in the Writings of the Fathers of the Church", K. Kunnumparam, *The Eucharist and Life: Indian Christian Reflections on the Lord's Supper*, Bandra: St. Pauls, 2007, 101.

³⁰ T. Whalen, *The Authentic Doctrine of the Eucharist*, Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1993, 28-29.

³¹ J. Neuner & J. Dupuis (eds.), *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, 6th ed., Bangalore: TPI, 1998, 586.

The Church has reasserted the aspects of communion and sharing in the Eucharist, especially after the Second Vatican Council. The Council spoke about the various aspects of the Eucharist and characterized the Eucharist as the sacrament of love, sign of unity and bond of charity (SC 47). The unity of God's people is aptly signified and admirably realized by this most holy Sacrament (LG 11, 26; UR 2). The unity effected by Eucharist has two aspects: ecclesial and Christological. The Eucharist unites the members among themselves and through Christ with God. "By really partaking of the Lord's body in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, we are taken into communion with him and with one another" (LG 7). Through the Eucharist we are drawn into communion with God and with each other (SC 48).

In *Sacramentum Caritatis*, the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Eucharist, Pope Benedict XVI calls Eucharist the sacrament of charity (*Sacramentum Caritatis* 1). He speaks about the social implications of the Eucharistic mystery. "The sacrifice of Christ is a mystery of liberation that constantly and insistently challenges us... All who partake of the Eucharist must commit themselves to peacemaking in our world scarred by violence

and war, and today in particular, by terrorism, economic corruption and sexual exploitation" (*Sacramentum Caritatis* 89). Pope reminds us that the mystery of the Eucharist obliges us to do everything possible to end or at least reduce the scandal of hunger and malnutrition afflicting so many millions of people in our world (*Sacramentum Caritatis* 91).

The suggestion of Balasuriya to think over other alternatives instead of the use of wine to be conducive to the Asian culture is not approved by the Church. The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments instructs: "The wine that is used in the most sacred celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice must be natural, from the fruit of the grape, pure and incorrupt, not mixed with other substances. During the celebration itself, a small quantity of water is to be mixed with it. Great care should be taken so that the wine intended for the celebration of the Eucharist is well conserved and has not soured. It is altogether forbidden to use wine of doubtful authenticity or provenance, for the Church requires certainty regarding the conditions necessary for the validity of the sacraments. Nor are other drinks of any kind to be admitted for any reason, as they do not constitute valid matter."³²

³² Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Instruction *Redemptionis sacramentum: On certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist*, Rome: 2004, no. 50; hereafter cited as *Redemptionis sacramentum*. In this context it is relevant to note the tradition of St. Thomas Christians of Malabar. According to the witnesses provided by the missionaries, the St. Thomas Christians were making use of the juice of grapes for the Mass, instead of wine of grapes. The juice was made out of dried grapes by putting it in water on the eve of the celebration and then pressing out the juice in the morning before the Mass. *Paesi Novamente Ritrovati et Novo Mondo da Alberico Vesputio Florentino Intitulato (1508)*, facsimile in *Vespucci Reprints, Text and Studies*, 6, London 1916, p.198. Cf. also V. Pathikulangara, *Qurbana: The Eucharistic Celebration of the Chaldeo-Indian Church*, Kottayam 1998, 116. Despite the fact that the St. Thomas Christians were making use of the juice of grapes in their Eucharistic celebrations, their Eucharistic celebrations were considered valid.

Balasuriya's opinion to include passages from the sacred writings of the East in the readings for the Divine Office and in the service of the Word is discarded by the teachings of the Church. On this point the Church teaches that it is an abuse to introduce into the celebration of Holy Mass elements that are contrary to the prescriptions of the liturgical books and taken from the rites of other religions.³³ "In selecting the biblical readings for proclamation in the celebration of Mass, the norms found in the liturgical books are to be followed."³⁴

4. Concluding Observations

The validity of the approach of conceiving Eucharist as the sacrament of communion and sharing is testified by the New Testament and the Sacred Tradition of the Church.

Eucharist is the sharing and the self-giving of Jesus. In the form of bread and wine Jesus gives His body to be broken and His blood to be poured out for others. It reinforces our love for God and concern for one another. It is both a communion with God and among the members of the community.

Participation in the Eucharistic celebration is not complete, if it does not lead to a proper Eucharistic life. True worship entails the whole life. There should be a

relationship between the liturgical life and the social life.

Eucharist is a dynamic action of God for change in our lives. Eucharist has a transformative power and potential for both personal and communitarian transformation. By the epiclesis, the Holy Spirit transforms both the gifts and the community. Eucharist makes the Eucharistic community a new creation.³⁵

Eucharistic celebration is not a mere repetition of a ritual. Rather it should become the source of spiritual strength for us, to lead a life of communion and sharing. It is only when one responds to the situations of discrimination and dehumanisation, that his participation in the Eucharistic celebration becomes complete and authentic.³⁶

This is particularly true in the contemporary Indian context where the situation of poverty is crucial. Despite the technological and industrial progress, there are a good number of poor people in our country, who struggle to meet the ends of their life. Eucharistic celebration demands a genuine commitment to follow Jesus in his love for the last, the least and the lost in our society. One glaring example and model for us Christians in India in this regard is Mother Teresa. She began her day by trying to see Christ through the bread, and during the day seeing Him hidden beneath the poorest of

³³ *Redemptionis sacramentum*, no. 79.

³⁴ *Redemptionis sacramentum*, no. 61.

³⁵ Antony Charanghat, "Essence of the Eucharist" in *The Examiner*, June 21-27, 2014, 7.

³⁶ G. Therukattil, *Eucharist: Energizer of a Spirituality for the Third Millennium*, Aluva: Jeevamrutha Publications, 2000, 68.

the poor. She could very well combine both the aspects of love and action in her life. She said "We cannot say that we love Jesus in the Eucharist but we have no time for the poor. If you really love Jesus in the Eucharist, you will naturally want to put that love into action. We cannot separate these two things...the Eucharist and the poor."³⁷

Very often many cry out for drastic structural changes to the extent that they may begin to think about changing their lives only after structural changes. Communion and sharing are not nice ideals that can be applied and interpreted at the level of the society alone. They are to be addressed to the concrete life situations of the individuals. Both personal and structural changes are important. Our personal transformations and the transformation of the society must take place drawing inspiration from the Holy Eucharist.

The celebration and the reception of the Eucharist should have life-transforming implications in every realm of Christian life. Those who lead married life have to draw their strength from the Eucharistic celebration for the life of sacrifice. If the family members come for the Eucharistic celebration without respect and love among them, they are not worthy to participate in this sacrament of communion and sharing.

The ministry of Jesus was out of his compassionate love towards the people (Mk 6:34). The priests and the religious are called to continue the same ministry of Jesus. Their

ministry should be a service with compassionate love, which has nothing to do with imposing authority and acting out of one's own obstinate and selfish interests. They have to learn to get strength and inspiration for their ministry from Jesus who is now present in the sacrament of the Eucharist.

Small communities in the early Church could easily gather in homes and share everything what they possessed. When the community is grew and the selfishness of the people increased, the spirit of sharing decreased. One of the areas into which the attention should be paid by the pastors in a parish is the family units. Family units should be considered primarily as units of sharing and not merely units of celebration. If a pastor could foster the spirit of sharing in the family units of his parish, that will eventually lead to the transformation of the parish.

Every Eucharistic celebration entrusts with a mission: the mission of sharing God's love and to be the agents of communion with God and others. Jesus urges us to inculcate the values of communion and sharing. May I conclude with the words of Pope Francis: "Jesus' whole life, his way of dealing with the poor, his actions, his integrity, his simple daily acts of generosity, and finally his complete self-giving, is precious and reveals the mystery of his divine life. Whenever we encounter this anew, we become convinced that it is exactly what others need, even though they may not recognize it" (*Evangelii Gaudium* 265).

³⁷ As cited in A. C. Savarimuthu, "Mother Teresa's Contextual Reflections on Eucharist", *Indian Theological Studies* 37 (2000), 165.

Eucharistic Concept in *Amoris Laetitia*

Dr. Francis Pittappillil

Introduction

Amoris Laetitia (AL) “The Joy of Love”, the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation published on 8 April 2016, brings together the results of the two Synods on the family convoked by Pope Francis in 2014 and 2015. It often cites their final reports, documents, and teachings of Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis on family. Its 325 paragraphs are distributed over nine chapters. Through this Apostolic Exhortation, Pope Francis carefully analyses the contemporary challenges that the family faces. Throughout the document, he highlights the significance of Eucharist in the family life. According to him, Eucharist has an important role in the creation and formation of the Christian families. Understanding its great importance, Pope Francis has used the term Eucharist 21 times in this apostolic letter. He calls Eucharist “a medicine for the imperfect” to heal the wounds of the family. Therefore, all the Christian families have to meditate on the great mystery of Eucharist to learn the basic lessons of Christian love and communion.

Challenges of Christian family

The Pope Francis analyzes the reality of the family today in all its complexity, with both its lights and shadows (AL 32).¹ He invites us to listen to the agonies and sorrows experienced by the modern families. The real threats to the existence of the families in the contemporary era are divorce, violence against children and women, pornography, consumerism, secularization and relativism. As a result of the above mentioned social realities so many traditional values safeguarded in the family setup are endangered. The diminishing nature of daily family prayer, the increasing number of nuclear families, the decreasing rate of conjugal fidelity, the accelerating rate of alcoholism etc. are creating unprecedented problems in family life. The document points out that “the tensions created by an overly individualistic culture, caught up with possessions and pleasures, leads to intolerance and hostility in families”.² The present culture promotes narcissistic, hedonistic and changing affectivity instead of self-giving and lasting affectivity. Narcissism makes people incapable of looking beyond their own desires and

¹Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Relatio Synodi* (18 October 2014), 5.

²Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Relatio Synodi* (18 October 2014), 8.

needs. Pope notes that rampant individualism makes it difficult for a person to give oneself generously to another (AL 33). At present, individualism has intruded into every area of family life. It is leading towards radical loneliness within family life. Nobody has got time to take care of the other. Consequently, the children, the elderly etc. are completely thrown into loneliness. Euthanasia and assisted suicide are serious threats to families worldwide (AL 48). The weakening of faith and religious practice is another threat to the existence and survival of good Christian families (AL 43).

Marriage and Family

Amoris Laetitia speaks extensively about the intrinsic relation between marriage and family (AL 63). The letter reiterates that Jesus has restored and redeemed the marriage and family (Mt 10: 1-12; Eph 5:21-23). It is through the Church that Christ bestows on the marriage and the family the grace necessary to bear witness to the love of God and to live the life of communion. The document defines marriage as a “mixture of enjoyment and struggles, tensions and repose, pain and relief, satisfactions and longings, annoyances and pleasures” (AL 126). It enriches the couples’ prospects of mutual love and self-giving (AL 307).

Christian marriage, a reflection of the union between Christ and Church, is fully realized in the union between a man and a woman who give themselves to each other

in a free, faithful and exclusive love and are consecrated by the sacrament, which grants them the grace to become a domestic Church (AL 292). The document vehemently affirms the indissolubility and sacramental nature of marriage, the transmission of life and the education of children. “The indissolubility of marriage – ‘what God has joined together, let no man put asunder’ (Mt 19:6) – should be viewed as a gift granted to those who are joined in marriage” (AL 62).

Ephrem, an East Syrian Church Father, postulates that baptism is the betrothal and the Eucharist is the wedding feast of Christ and the Church. Ephrem attributes the imagery of bridegroom to Christ to show his relationship with the Church, the bride. He sees Eucharist as the wedding feast of Christ, where the bride is both the Church and the individual soul. Marriage is holy and good (*Hymn on Virginity* 5, 14) and it is the symbol of Christ’s union with the Church. Matrimony sanctifies the family since it is blessed and instituted by God (*Hymn on Virginity* 5, 14). Ephrem thinks of Christ as the bridegroom and the individual soul as the bride. Jesus raised marriage to the sacramental sign of his love for the Church (Mt 19:1-12; Mk 10: 1-12; Eph 5:21-32).³ *Amoris Laetitia* sees marriage as a vocation and a response to a specific call to experience conjugal love. In this sense, Pope Francis sees the marriage and family as the fruit of vocational discernment (AL 72).

³Sacred Scripture presents God’s covenant with his people as an espousal (cf. Ez 16:8, 60; Is 62:5; Hos 2:21-22), and that the new covenant is also presented as a betrothal (cf. Rev 19:7; 21:2).

Family: The Domestic Church

Family is called the “domestic Church” by the Vatican II (LG 11). It is the primary unit and authentic cell of the Church. Since the spouses are consecrated, they have the responsibility to build up the domestic Church by the grace they have received through the sacrament of marriage (AL 67). According to Pope Francis the food of Eucharist offers the spouses the strength and incentive needed to live the marriage covenant each day as “domestic Church” (AL 318). Family is trained to be the proto type of the Church. In the early Church, the faithful were gathering in houses for prayer and Eucharistic celebration. The New Testament speaks of “Churches that meet in homes” (1 Cor 16:19, Rom 16:15, Col 4:15, Philem 2). The Apostolic letter clearly affirms that the Christian families are the principal agents of the family apostolate especially through “their joy-filled witness as “domestic Churches” (AL 200).

Pope Francis says: “a family’s living space could turn into a domestic Church, a setting for the Eucharist, the presence of Christ, seated at its table” (AL 15). The Christian Spirit and prayer atmosphere can be fostered in the family only if the family members get proper Christian formation through the participation in the Eucharistic celebration. Eucharist bestows the grace that helps the family members to face the challenges of marriage and the family (AL 38). It heals the wounds of the family members and prompts them to live in love and harmony. The family may turn into a domestic Church, when the children are brought up in the Eucharistic faith

(Ps 78: 3-6). The children are called to accept and respect their parents (Ex 20:12) who are the first teachers in the Eucharistic faith (AL16). The parents have a serious responsibility to teach the basic lessons of faith (Prov 3:11-12) to their children. Further, by transmitting the mystery of faith to the children, the parents may invite them to the ecclesial life and encourage them to participate in the Eucharistic celebration. Thus the family can live its spirituality by being a domestic Church.

Family and Eucharist

The word Eucharist means thanksgiving. Christian families are thanking in and through the person of Jesus in the Holy Qurbana. All family members are to be gathered together before the Eucharistic celebration to thank God for the gift of family. They should make the Eucharist the source of their unity. The Eucharistic love demands that the faithful should thank each other for the gift of familial love and communion. After the model of Eucharistic love, all are called to love each other. The love that flows among the family members is the most important element of their spirituality. Pope Francis says; “the strength of the family lies in its capacity to love and to teach how to love. The family is called to care for and empower each of its members” (AL 53). Pope Benedict XVI writes: “I encourage families in particular to draw inspiration and strength from this sacrament (Eucharist). The love between man and woman, openness to life, and the raising of children are privileged spheres in which the Eucharist can reveal its power to transform life and give it its full meaning.”⁴

⁴ Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 79.

The Syriac word for Eucharist is *Qurbana* which means offering. The prefatory dialogue, the *g'hanta* prayers, the *kušapa* of intercession, the prayer request of the celebrant and the response and the epiclesis of the Anaphora of Mar Addai and Mar Mari and the Anaphora of Theodore contain explicit reference to Eucharist as *Qurbana* or offering.⁵ Actually, it is a sacrament of the self-offering of God for the salvation of man. God gives His Son, the Son offers himself and the Holy Spirit sanctifies people. The family is also the locus for offering oneself for the other. The parents and children are called to be broken for the other and for the entire family. The document states that the family communion can only be preserved and perfected through a great spirit of sacrifice (AL 105).

Pope Francis reiterates the role of Sunday Eucharist in the family life (AL 223). Christian families should make the Eucharist the source of their unity. They can do this through actively and consciously participating in Holy *Qurbana* each Sunday. Pope Benedict speaks about the importance of living the Sunday obligation in the apostolic letter *Sacramentum Caritatis*. He says that Sunday Mass, being an obligation for all the faithful, is the wellspring of authentic freedom enabling them to live each

day in accordance with what they celebrated on "the Lord's Day".⁶ Speaking of the various dimensions of the Christian celebration of Sunday, Pope John Paul II said that it is *Dies Domini* with regard to the work of creation, *Dies Christi* as the day of the new creation and the Risen Lord's gift of the Holy Spirit, *Dies Ecclesiae* as the day on which the Christian community gathers for the celebration, and *Dies Hominis* as the day of joy, rest and fraternal charity.⁷ Therefore, on every Sunday the faithful are to be gathered before the Eucharistic altar for the celebration of the salvific events.

The Sunday is the memorial day of the marriage of Christ, the Bridegroom and the Church, His Bride. Here, the focus is on the "value of the Sunday Eucharistic celebration, where the family can always draw the strength of the Spirit to be itself in all its truth and beauty". The reception of Holy Communion deepens our union with Christ and draws us more deeply into the one Body of Christ, the Church.

Eucharist: A Powerful Medicine

The Syriac Fathers spoke of the Eucharistic bread as the medicine of life (*Sam hayye*). According to St. Ephrem by the Lord's blessing, the bread became the medicine of life during the Last Supper.⁸ It is well expressed

⁵Cfr. The prayer request and response of people, the *kušapa* of intercession, the fourth *gehanta* and epiclesis of AM (*Raza*, 39, 42, 44): the fourth and fifth *gehantas* and epiclesis of AN (Naduthadam, *Anaphore de Nestorius*, 250, 258, 269); *kušapa* of intercession, fourth *gehanta*, and epiclesis of AT (Vadakil, *Anaphora of Mar Theodore*, 87, 88, 90).

⁶Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 73.

⁷ Cf. John Paul II, *Dies Domini*.

⁸Ephrem, *Hymnen de Azymis*, 14, 16.

by Narsai of Nisibis in the 5th century who states that the healing through this medicine purifies us from the debts and forgives our offences.⁹ St. Ambrose says, “I must receive it always, so that it may always forgive my sins. If I sin continually, I must always have a remedy”.¹⁰

The Syro-Malabar Qurbana emphatically affirms the power of the Eucharist to forgive sins. The prayer of epiclesis makes it clear that the Eucharist aims at the remission of sins (Raza 45). The Holy Spirit is invoked to sanctify the offering: “that it may be to us unto pardons of debts, remission of sins and the great hope of resurrection from the dead and new life in the kingdom” (Raza 45). The Eucharist is given for the communion with the acclamation that it is for the forgiveness of sins (Raza 57).

The Pope Francis says that “the Eucharist is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine for the imperfect” (AL351). This beautiful expression of Pope is an encouragement for those who acknowledge their unworthiness to receive the body and blood of Christ. This dictum is already familiar

in the *Evangelii Gaudium* where Pope Francis writes: “The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak”.¹¹ Here the Eucharist is depicted as a medicine for the imperfect. The bounteous effects of the Eucharist, specifically in regard to forgiveness of and preservation from sin, are laid out in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.¹² As medicine of life the Eucharist liberates us from the chains of sins, purifies and remits our debts which are the consequences of sins.

Family Spirituality

Just like priestly or religious spirituality, we need to articulate and foster a familial spirituality. Families acquire the knowledge and skills for sharing faith and moral values at home. The family spirituality, which essentially includes evening prayer, participation in the Eucharist and Bible reading, fosters the bond between the family members. The dictum that “the family that prays together stays together” is true with regard to the existence of every family. In this context, the Pope encourages the devotional practices and the Eucharistic

⁹Narsai, *Homily XVII, AnExpositon of the Mysteries*, in *Liturgical Homilies*, 29.

¹⁰Ambrose, *De Sacramentis*, IV, 6, 28. *Patrologia Latina* 16, 464; Op. cit., IV, 5, 24: *Patrologia Latina* 16, 463. “Those who ate manna died: those who eat this body will obtain the forgiveness of their sins”; St. Cyril of Alexandria, in John IV, 2: *Patrologia Greca* 73, 584-585: “I examined myself and I found myself unworthy. To those who speak thus I say: when will you be worth? When at last you present yourself before Christ? And if your sins prevent you from drawing nigh, and you never cease to fall – for, as the Psalm say, ‘what man knows his faults?– will you remain without partaking of the sanctification that gives life for eternity?

¹¹ Francis, *EvangeliiGaudium*, No. 47

¹² CCC, 1393-1395, 1436, 1846. However, CCC states, “Anyone conscious of a grave sin must receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before coming to communion”. CCC 1385.

celebrations conducted in the connection with the wedding anniversary of the couples.¹³ The Holy Eucharist, Vatican II tells us, is “the source and summit of the Christian life”.¹⁴ Since the Christian family life is essentially a spiritual life, we might say as well that the Eucharist is the “source and summit of family spirituality” too.

Pope Francis clearly states that “those who have deep spiritual aspirations should not feel that the family detracts from their growth in the life of the Spirit, but rather see it as a path which the Lord is using to lead them to the heights of mystical union” (AL 316). The family is a means and way for the faithful to attain spiritual perfection. It is a profound “spiritual experience to contemplate our loved ones with the eyes of God and to see Christ in them” (AL 323). It helps them to grow further in divine love and human love. *Amoris Laetitia* affirms that if a family is centered on Jesus, He will unify and illumine its entire life” (AL 317).

Family prayer is a specific way of expressing and strengthening the Eucharistic spirituality celebrated in the parish. The moments of prayer can do immense good for the Christian family. Pope encourages the various expressions of popular piety which are really a treasure of spirituality for many families. The letter states that the family’s communal journey of prayer culminates by sharing together in the Eucharist (AL 318).

Jesus knocks on the door of the families to share with them the Eucharistic supper (Rev 3:20).

The family spirituality could be cherished and nurtured by means of mutual sharing of the word of God among the family members. In the words of Pope Francis, Word of God is not a series of abstract ideas but rather a source of comfort and companionship for every family (AL 22). It helps the family to discern the various challenges and difficulties that married couples and families encounter (AL 227).

Parish Spirituality

Amoris Laetitia delineates the parish based spirituality along with the family spirituality. The parish is the family of the families, where small communities, ecclesial movements and associations live in harmony.¹⁵ The active participation in pious associations and other parish activities also help the faithful to grow in both spiritual and social life. The core of the parish spirituality is the Eucharistic celebration, for which all the parishioners come together. There should not be any discrimination between the rich and the poor, for, all are sons of God and therefore, equal before the Eucharistic table. Here Pope Francis, the apostle of mercy, quotes the imbalanced situation of the Corinthian community where the rich enjoyed their food and the poor were hungry (1 Cor

¹³Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Relatio Synodi* (18 October 2014), 40.

¹⁴*Lumen Gentium*, no. 11; cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1324.

11: 17-34). The Eucharist makes us aware that we are members of the one body of the Church (AL 186). The Pope exhorts us to avoid all the scandalous divisions and distinctions among the members of the mystical body of Christ.

The letter emphasizes that the participation in the Eucharist is a constant summon for everyone to examine himself or herself (1 Cor 11:28). According to Pope Benedict XVI, the ‘mysticism’ of the Eucharist has a social character.¹⁶ It opens the doors of the family to a greater fellowship with the underprivileged. The Eucharistic love which makes us one body, enables us to overcome the barriers of divisions that exist in the families and society. Further, the letter points out the distinction between those who receive the Eucharist worthily and unworthily. The Apostolic letter vehemently affirms that when those who receives it, turn a blind eye to the poor and suffering, or consent to various forms of division, contempt and inequality, the Eucharist is received unworthily. The worthy participants imbibe social consciousness and fraternal communion in the family (AL 186).

Relevance of Pastoral Accompaniment

Pope Francis points out the importance of pastoral accompaniment of the couples by the experienced couples with the eventual cooperation of associations and ecclesiastical movements. The Pope asks the pastors to

avoid judgments over the people who live in the complexities of married life (AL 79). The pastors are obliged to exercise careful discernment of the situations. As far as discernment with regard to “irregular” situations is concerned, the Pope states that there is a need ‘to avoid judgements which do not take into account the complexity of various situations’ and ‘to be attentive, by necessity, to how people experience distress because of their condition’ (AL 296). Pope Francis exhorts the pastors to discern carefully those who live in irregular situation. They have to be more integrated into the Christian communities in a variety of ways. They are to live and grow in the Church and experience her as a mother who welcomes them always.

Therefore, the Pope encourages the practical pastoral care of ministers and of communities towards those who live in irregular situations. In order to confront the life situations of the wounded and broken families, the Church must be capable of imparting the divine love to those wounded broken families. The Church shall never fail to realize the truth that whenever the families are broken, the Church is broken. The logic of pastoral mercy can strengthen the marriages and family relations. The pastors should avoid all the prejudices towards those who are in the complexities of family. Rather the pastors should prompt them to walk hand in hand with the mystical body of Christ. On the “logic of pastoral mercy”, Pope Francis

¹⁵ Fourteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, *Relatio Finalis*, 2015, 77.

¹⁶ Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, Vatican 2005, 14.

emphasizes: "At times we find it hard to make room for God's unconditional love in our pastoral activity. We put so many conditions on mercy that we empty it of its concrete meaning and real significance. That is the worst way of watering down the Gospel" (AL 311).

Pope Francis clarifies the close bond between Eucharist and marriage in the context of covenant. Eucharist is the sacrament of the new covenant where Christ's redemptive work is carried out (Lk 22:20). The covenant between Jesus, the bridegroom and the Church, the bride was sealed on the Cross. So also marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman. They can seal anew their covenant in the context of paschal covenant which God sealed with mankind on the Cross (AL 318).

Conclusion

Amoris Laetitia, the Apostolic letter of Pope Francis, offers distinctive and specific theology of family based on the Eucharist. The document asserts that marriage is an icon of God's love for us (AL121). Franzian language

of mercy is used throughout the letter to face and overcome the challenges of family life. He exhorts the priests to apply the logic of mercy in the pastoral field. Since Eucharist is the 'medicine of life', its reception helps the faithful to glorify God and to sanctify the family. The family prayer and reading of the word of God lend a hand to the family to stay together and to give a commendable witness to Christ. The Church, the family of families, is necessary for the family and the family for the Church. Further, the family spirituality and parish spirituality are to be fostered for the well being of both the family and Church. *Amoris Laetitia* strongly emphasises the need for the pastoral accompaniment by the priests to those who are weak and live in the situation of error. They have to be invited to come to the main stream of the Church since Church is the house of all the faithful. Every family may try to live according to the Eucharistic love which is broken for others. In short, *Amoris Laetitia* is a handbook for all the faithful to know the basic principles of Christian family life and a soothing for the imperfect.

Book Review

James Thodathil, *Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed: A Liturgical and Theological Analysis with Special Reference to the Funeral Liturgy in the West Syrian Tradition*, OIRSI Publications (Kottayam 201), Pages: xxii+ 360, Price: Rs 300.

West Syrian liturgical prayers are rich in contents of theology. The theological position of the Church is well expressed in its liturgies. Therefore, in order to get the theology of this Church a detailed study of its liturgy is inevitable. The book by Fr. James Thodathil is an attempt to explore the theological position of the West Syrian Church regarding life after death and prayers for the departed ones.

Order of Service of the Sunday of the Departed is a detailed liturgical and theological analysis of the order of service of the Sunday of the departed with special reference to the funeral liturgical service of the West Syrian Tradition. It is a well-documented study enriched with liturgical sources and views of renowned Theologians. The author takes the Order of service of the Sunday of the departed as the most important source of the study. Alongside some important prayers of the funeral liturgy in the West are also taken for comparison.

This book contains four chapters. The principal source of this book is given in the first chapter. At first this chapter provides us with an introduction to the Syriac manuscript, namely the manuscript of the Order of the Service of the Departed. This chapter presents the Syriac text as it is given in the Manuscript, followed by the English translation of the text. The translation of this Syriac text is indeed a great contribution to the West Syrian liturgical tradition.

In the second chapter the author discusses the structure and important contents of the Order of the Service. Along with that the author makes special notes on the important prayers in the west Syrian Liturgy of Hours dealing with the commemoration of the departed. Thus he paves way to understand the similarities of prayers of this Order of the Service with those of other liturgical services of the West Syrian tradition. Here the structure and theology of the Liturgy of the Hours is well-depicted. By making detailed inquiry into the Liturgy of the Hours the author makes clear that in the West no liturgical prayer is completed without the prayer for the departed. This chapter helps us to understand the similarities of prayers of this Order of the Service with those of other liturgical services of the West.

Most of the elements and major theological insights of the Order of the Service is found in the West Syrian funeral liturgy. So the author makes in the third chapter a comparative study of the contents of the Order of the Service with the funeral liturgy of the West Syrian tradition. He makes a detailed analysis of all the prayers of the text and makes also a similar study of the funeral liturgies of Priests, Nuns, men, women and children

in the West. As a consequence one can easily understand the theological stand of the Church concerning death and life after death and also it explains the doctrine of the West Syrian tradition on the prayer for the departed. These prayers make explicit the necessity of praying for the departed. Almost all the prayers contain the strong belief that the prayer of the faithful will help the departed and the Lord will raise the departed and vivify them on the day of His Second coming. Christ promised resurrection to all who believed in Him. Death is temporary and it is a separation from the world and it is a gate to the eternal life. All important themes related to death are mentioned here.

Meaning and relevance of Christian death is the main focus point of the fourth chapter. Here the author attempts to highlight the important theological themes found in the Order of the Service and make a study of these themes in comparison with other West Syrian liturgical services like Holy Qurbano, prayers of the special Sundays and feast days in the Penqito etc. The author enriches his work by bringing forth the views of the early Syriac Fathers like Aphrahat, Mar Aprem the Syrian and Jacob of Serugh, concerning death and life after death. A remarkable theology of death and life after death is presented here. For a Christian faithful death is the liberation from the earthly bondage and is the entrance to the eternal life. The faithful pray for the remission of sins of their departed faithful and beseech that God may grant them the resurrection and new life. The Church believes that the body and blood of Christ which are consumed by the departed faithful help them as provisions for their journey to the heavenly Jerusalem. The prayers of the Order of the Service declare that the departed is called as one who has departed to God, one who is received or accepted by God, one who lives with Christ, one who is among the Angels and among the saints etc. Thus the author, by analysing the prayers makes clear that death is not an emptiness of human life but a mode of existence and is a door to the new state of living. Thus a beautiful theology of death is presented in this book.

The author concludes that the West Syrian tradition is quite convinced of life after death and need of prayer for the help of the faithful departed. The theology of death is manifested in the various prayers of this tradition. The author has absorbed the real spirit of the West Syrian tradition and added his own reflections. He has opened a new horizon to think over the liturgy which shapes our spiritual life. West Syrian liturgy is very rich in the eschatological perspective. Almost all important eschatological themes are present in this liturgy. Since it is the daily practice of the people of God, liturgy can easily bring to the minds of the people strong conviction about the last things. The Church on earth is always expecting the return of Christ in glory, the resurrection of the dead and eternal life. Liturgy is the privileged place where this deep eschatological hope is expressed and renewed. This book brings to us a clear picture of our life, death and life after death. The author extends a solemn invitation in this book to adhere to the voice of eternity. I am glad to state that Fr James Thodathil has succeeded in manifesting the '*lex credendi*' of the West Syrian Church, analysing its '*lex orandi*'.

Fr. Joseph Arimattath

News

'*Amoris Laetitia*', Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis

Pope Francis signed the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation '*Amoris Laetitia*' (AL), on 19 March 2016. This document deals with the joy of love in marriage and family. This document is in continuity with the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (EG); from the joy of gospel to the joy of love in family. The exhortation takes a positive approach to the beauty of male- female sexuality, love, marriage and family. This is the result of the two years' work of the Synod of Bishops in 2014 and 2015.

New Office Bearers for the Catholic Bishops Council of India (CBCI)

Cardinal Baselios Mar Cleemis Catholicos was re-elected as the President of CBCI. The election was held during the general assembly of CBCI, held on 07 March 2016 at St. John's Medical College, Bangalore. Archbishop Mar Andrews Thazhath (Trichur) and Archbishop Most Rev. Philip Neri Feraro (Goa) were elected as its Vice Presidents. Bishop Most Rev. Theodor Maskaranas S.F.X. (Auxiliary bishop of Ranji Archdiocese) was also elected as the Secretary General of CBCI

Bishop Donated Kidney to a Hindu Youth

Mar Jacob Murickan, the auxiliary Bishop of Palai donated a kidney to a struggling Hindu Youth in southern Kerala. This act was well appreciated as an act of mercy during the year of Mercy. The 53 year old auxiliary bishop commented: "Jesus spoke of giving life and I have experienced it". Mr. Sooraj, the recipient of the kidney said: "It is incredible that I am receiving the kidney of a bishop. This is beyond words,"

Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio* "Like a Loving Mother" Published

Pope Francis promulgated the Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio* "Like a Loving Mother" on Saturday 04 June. In it, Pope Francis decrees that "the negligence of a Bishop in the exercise of his office and in particular in relation to cases of sexual abuses inflicted on minors and vulnerable adults" will be one among the grave reasons provided under Canon Law for the removal of a Bishop from ecclesiastical office. The Church is especially vigilant in protecting children and vulnerable adults.

Statutes of the New Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life

Holy Father, Pope Francis, in accordance with the proposal made by the council of Cardinals, approved *Ad Experimentum* the new statutes of the dicastery for Laity, family and Life on 04 June 2016. It will combine the Pontifical Council for the Family and the Pontifical Council for the Laity. The new dicastery will come into force on 01 September 2016.

Rev. Fr. George Plathottam, a Passionate Lover of Syriac Language, Passed Away

Rev. Fr. George Plathottam, a great lover of the Syriac language, passed away on 11 June 2016. He was a priest, hailing from the eparchy of Palai, born on 16 February 1933 and ordained priest on 15 March 1961. All through his priestly ministry, he dedicated his time and energy for promoting this sacred language Syriac. His excellence in Syriac music was something unique of its kind and he passionately trained his disciples for it. The audio recording of the Syriac text of the most solemn Qurbana (Raza) of the Syro-Malabar Church was well appreciated by the faithful.

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